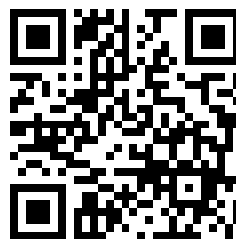
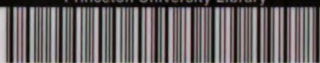

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In Memory of
**MAJOR GENERAL
JULIUS OCHS ADLER**
Class of 1914

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**8th BATTALION
THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY**



THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF DURHAM, K.G., G.C.V.O., V.D.
Honorary Colonel.

8th BATTALION
**THE DURHAM
LIGHT INFANTRY**
1793-1926

A HISTORY COMPILED BY
MAJOR E. HARDINGE VEITCH
M.C., T.D.

FROM THE WAR DIARY, AND FROM
DOCUMENTS, MAPS, ETC., LENT BY
PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF
THE BATTALION



DURHAM
J. H. VEITCH & SONS LTD., NORTH ROAD



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DURHAM
J. H. VEITCH & SONS LTD., NORTH ROAD

(RECAP)

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IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF OUR COMRADES
OF 1914-1918, WHO, SOME FULL OF YEARS, MANY
IN EARLY YOUTH, ALIKE LAID DOWN THEIR
LIVES FOR ENGLAND.

70 G 40220

PREFACE

THROUGH many of these pages runs the simple record of the great deeds and little happenings which, amid the manifold chances of the Great War, went to make up the daily life of this Battalion of "Faithful Durhams."

To most of those who read will come many memories, not all of them sad, for so it seems with human nature that the happiest impressions remain long after all others have become dulled with the passing of time.

For those to whom the war meant only weary waiting or ultimate loss there has been throughout in the writing of this history an endeavour to give a picture, of necessity inadequate, of the life in France and Flanders with its hardships, escapes, excitements and exultations.

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FOREWORD

By THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF DURHAM, K.G., G.C.V.O., V.D., HON. COLONEL

IN this history of the 8th Battalion Durham Light Infantry, so admirably and carefully compiled, the reader cannot fail to be impressed by the splendid spirit of comradeship it depicts and by the dauntless determination of all ranks to add to the honour and glory of their County Regiment.

As a child I gazed with admiration and awe on the wearers of the uniforms of our parent Volunteer Corps, and was convinced that so brave and gallant a body of men could fear no foe.

In my old age, as Honorary Colonel of this Battalion, I realize how much we owe to the patriotism and foresight of our predecessors and to the consistent support of our local citizen soldiers—"They builded better than they knew."

It is no exaggeration, it is the simple truth, as Major-General Granville Egerton has recently written, that "the men who were Territorial soldiers on August 4th, 1914, were, of all those who battled during the four years of conflict, the real true salt of the earth. Few of them remain, and very meagre were the thanks they got."

This County of Durham knows only too well how few remain of our Territorials and of the thousands of gallant men who joined up in 1914. All honour to their memories.

The achievements of our 8th Battalion in the Great War are recorded in this book with such modesty, with such an intense spirit of comradeship, that it is evident that officers and men have united in a labour of love in providing these authentic and accurate details.

FOREWORD

The result is a lasting and most honourable memorial.

I thank the Battalion for allowing me to associate myself with this volume, and to offer a tribute of veneration for departed comrades and of gratitude to old and present members who have deserved so well of the County by upholding its best traditions.

The Battle Honours of the Battalion are a distinguished contribution to the record of the noble services of our Northern Counties in the greatest crisis of our national history.

DURHAM.

8TH BATTALION

THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

CHAPTER I

THE YEARS 1793 TO 1914

THE traditions of the past have always counted for much in the Regular Army and the upholding of them in each generation of the regiments has ever been a point of honour and pride, and the Colours with their emblazoned names of old-time battles deeply revered. Although until the South African War of 1899-1902 Volunteer Battalions did not possess the same incentive to pride in the past, yet the spirit which led to the first recorded Volunteer Movement in the county of Durham about the year 1793 continued unabated down all the hundred and twenty-one years to 1914, and now with the Great War behind it is stronger still.

Somewhere about the year 1793, during the war against France in which England and Holland were Allies and there was possibility of invasion, several of the towns in the county raised Volunteer Corps, and as the battalions of the present day are undoubtedly the outcome of that movement they may be considered fairly entitled to claim that their history starts from that year.

In 1798 an "Armed Association" was formed in the city of Durham. Some five hundred citizens enrolled themselves, and from these three hundred were selected to form the Association. Their Commandant was Lieutenant-Colonel R. J. Fenwick. The Corps was in possession of Colours presented to it by Lady Milbanke on October 10th of the same year. In 1801, however, the Corps was disbanded, Peace having been declared, though it was not actually concluded until the Treaty of Amiens was signed in March, 1802. About fourteen months later, on May 22nd, 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte once more declared war against England, and in the city of Durham, at Chester-le-Street, and apparently in other parts of the county, Volunteers were again called for and the Corps reconstituted.

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There was a false alarm of invasion in 1804 as the result of the burning of some whins on the Lammermuir Hills, and this being taken for the beacon signal all Volunteers throughout the county were called to arms. The Durham City Corps, under the command of Major Mowbray, was assembled in readiness on the Palace Green within two hours of the alarm being given. As a consequence of this false alarm a new system of signals was adopted. How strangely would the mobilization scenes of August, 1914, contrast with the "Call to Arms" of that bygone day.

An old record shows that the Volunteers of Chester-le-Street "did ten days' permanent duty" in 1804, and were inspected by Sir Hew Dalrymple, who stated that he considered they were "well adapted for a Light Infantry Corps." This would appear to be the actual forerunner of the annual camps of later years.

In 1805 the Chester-le-Street Volunteers, together with others, assembled at South Shields for no less than twenty-one days' permanent duty. Here they were inspected by Brigadier-General Ker, from whom the "Chester Volunteers" drew the greatest praise for "their high state of discipline and soldier-like conduct when under arms." The Inspecting Officer also observed that they were the best disciplined Corps in the district and fit to be brigaded with any Regular Regiment. A relic of those far-off times is still preserved at Chester-le-Street in the last of a fine set of drinking goblets presented to the officers of the Chester-le-Street Volunteers by Major Richard Bell in 1804. On one side of the bowl are borne the initials of the donor, R. B., and on the other is inscribed "Chester Lads for ever."

From the records available the Volunteers apparently in 1806 again offered their services, which were accepted under the conditions which became so familiar to those who served in the war of 1914-1918: "For three years or until the conclusion of the war."

So far as the records of the forerunners of the present Battalion are concerned these show that in May, 1859, the Secretary for War issued a circular authorizing the formation of Volunteer Rifle Corps under the provisions of an Act passed in the reign of King George III. Meetings were consequently held at Durham, Chester-le-Street, Birtley and elsewhere, and through the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, the Earl of Durham, offers of the services of the Volunteers were made to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and were accepted. And so it is to the patriotic enthusiasm of those distant days, when wars between England and France were of frequent occurrence, that the present 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry owes its being.

In 1859, indeed, invasion was within measurable distance, for ships of war no longer relied upon their sails and favourable winds

to reach the shores of this country. Five Corps were thereupon raised and allotted the following titles:

Durham City: 7th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (3 Companies).
Beamish: 10th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (1 Company).
Chester-le-Street: 11th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (1 Company).
Birtley: 13th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (2 Companies).
Felling: 14th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (3 Companies).

There were, of course, other Corps raised in the county, but as these do not concern the 8th Battalion they are not shown herein.

From the above it will be seen that from 1859 right up to 1908, when the present Territorial Battalion succeeded the old 4th Volunteer Battalion, these places, together with Houghton-le-Spring, Hamsteels, Washington, West Stanley and Sacriston added later, furnished the Companies which in turn constituted the 1st Administrative Battalion Durham Rifle Volunteers (1860), the 7th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps (1880), a title altered the same year on the renumbering of the Corps in the county to the 4th Durham Rifle Volunteers, and later, in December, 1887, the 4th Volunteer Battalion Durham Light Infantry.

In 1908, on the transfer from the Volunteer organization to the Territorial Force as the 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry, Sacriston dropped out as a separate Company and Felling became part of the 9th Battalion area.

Each Corps in 1859 was self-contained and commanded by a Captain Commandant who made his own arrangements with regard to uniforms, equipment and armouries.

In 1860 the five Corps were, on September 7th, grouped together as the 1st Administrative Battalion commanded by a Major and with Headquarters at Chester-le-Street. In the December of this year the rank of the Commanding Officer was advanced to that of Lieutenant-Colonel. This, at the time, was Captain W. B. Wilkin, who held the appointment for twenty-nine years. So the records say. The uniform then worn was of a grey colour faced with green. The Battalion was armed with the long Enfield rifle. The following year, 1861, Sergeant-Instructors were appointed for the first time. These were selected from pensioners of the Regular Army.

A change of uniform was decided upon in 1863, it being found that the grey was unsuited to the local smoky atmosphere, and green was adopted as being the national colour for rifle regiments. This was faced with red after the pattern of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, and continued to be worn until 1908, when a change was made to khaki as a working or fighting dress and scarlet for full dress and

4 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

"Walking Out," thus falling into line with the Regular Battalions of the Regiment.

In July, 1863, the Earl of Durham accepted the appointment of Honorary Colonel of the Battalion, an appointment still held by the present Earl.

For the next seventeen years no changes of importance are recorded, and during these years Company Parades were held at the various Corps Headquarters and Battalion Parades at Chester-le-Street, Vigo or Birtley. From time to time large field days were organized, usually at Whitsuntide, when a review was held and field exercises were carried out either in Lumley Park, or on the Town Moor, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in which Artillery and Engineers joined. Once each year the District Inspecting Officer held an Inspection Parade.

In 1879 a scheme was introduced by the War Office to consolidate by counties the various Corps throughout each county into Battalions under a Battalion Commander, and on April 24th of the following year a meeting was held at Chester-le-Street of the officers commanding the Corps forming the 1st Administrative Battalion, and it was agreed to accept the new consolidation.

On May 19th of the same year (1880) the 7th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th Corps became one Corps with the title 7th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps, each Company being allotted a distinguishing letter. The three Companies at Durham City became A, B and C Companies, the Beamish Company became D Company, the Chester-le-Street Company E Company, the two Companies at Birtley and Washington (old 13th) became F and G Companies and the three Companies at Felling H, I and K Companies.

In June all the Corps in the county were renumbered, and the Battalion then became the 4th Durham Rifle Volunteers.

Till 1881 most of the detachments possessed bands of their own; this year, however, the establishment of these was laid down at the following strengths: Durham and Felling, 11 bandsmen and 6 buglers each; Beamish and Birtley, 4 bandsmen and 2 buglers each. On Battalion Parades these were massed under the senior bandmaster.

In 1885 the Battalion was re-armed, and the Martini Henri rifle superseded the old Snider rifle.

On December 13th, 1887, the title of the Battalion was again altered and became the 4th Volunteer Battalion Durham Light Infantry.

The first annual camp of the Battalion, lasting for seven days, was held at Richmond, Yorkshire, in the May of 1887, and a report of the work done was submitted to H.R.H. the Duke of Cambridge,

who remarked on "the special praise accorded to the 4th Volunteer Battalion Durham Light Infantry," and of the "fine appearance and excellent esprit de corps of the Battalion."

The Headquarters of the Battalion were transferred from Chester-le-Street to Durham City on March 24th, 1890.

In January, 1892, the system of Detachment Bands was abolished, the non-commissioned officers and men being absorbed into H and I Companies, and a new Company K was raised this year at Stanley.

No further changes are recorded until 1896, when on January 25th, the non-commissioned officers and men of I Company at Felling were absorbed into H Company at that station and a new I Company was raised at Sacriston. This year the Battalion was inspected by Lord Wolesley, the Commander-in-Chief.

In 1897 authority was granted for the transfer of the Headquarters of H Company from Felling to Houghton-le-Spring, and this was effected on February 15th.

October, 1899, saw the outbreak of the South African War, and on December 20th, a War Office circular was published to the effect that where a Regiment had one or more Battalions serving at the Front, the Volunteer Battalions affiliated to those Regiments might send a Composite Company to serve with such Battalions. Notice was accordingly published the same day in Battalion Orders stating that 3 officers and 115 men were required from the Durham Volunteer Battalions to take the place of a Company of the 1st Battalion The Durham Light Infantry which had been turned into a Company of Mounted Infantry, and asking for volunteers to fill the Battalion's quota of 23 men for the Composite Company. No less than 120 names were given in immediately—a splendid response.

On January 27th, 1900, the "First Service Company," commanded by Captain J. Turnbull with Lieutenant J. R. Ritson as subaltern, assembled at Newcastle-on-Tyne and were "sworn in" on February 14th. Eight days later, on the 22nd, the Company left Tynemouth for Southampton, embarking the following day on the Union Castle liner, *Avondale Castle*, together with various Volunteer Companies of other Regiments, for South Africa. The Company arrived at Cape Town on March 17th, and after three days in Green Point Camp re-embarked on the transport s.s. *Guelph* for Durban, which was reached on the 28th March. At Durban the Company entrained for Elandslaagte, the scene of one of the early fights before the investment of Ladysmith, to join the 1st Battalion The Durham Light Infantry under Colonel Woodland, in the 4th Brigade of the 2nd Division. This Brigade was composed of a Battalion each of the Durham Light Infantry, King's Royal Rifle Corps, Rifle Brigade

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and Scottish Rifles, all under Colonel Cooper of the Dublin Fusiliers as Brigadier.

The march under General Buller to clear Northern Natal then began, and the Company took part in the Battle of Laings Nek. On June 12th the Transvaal was entered, and on June 23rd Standerton, where 17 locomotives and 100 wagons were captured, was reached. Soon after this the 2nd Division was ordered back to the railway line, presumably a move to prevent De Wet joining Botha, and remained here operating between Standerton and Heidelberg till October 9th, when orders were received for the Company to entrain at Standerton for home. On the following day Pietermaritzburg was reached, where preparations for the homeward journey were in progress when further orders were received, and instead the Company proceeded, on October 17th, up country once more to Van Reenans Pass between Natal and the Orange Free State, where it joined a Provisional Battalion. On November 21st a draft of 20 men under Lieutenant Bowman (of the 5th Volunteer Battalion Durham Light Infantry) arrived from England.

From now on till towards the end of April, 1901, the Company was chiefly employed in the building of block houses.

On April 23rd the Company was relieved by the 3rd Manchester Regiments Volunteer Company and was ordered to Ladysmith, being here employed in guarding Boer Prisoners until May 7th, when it left Ladysmith and embarked the following day at Durban for home on the s.s. *Mohawk*. Southampton was reached on May 30th, 1901, and the men were discharged from their engagement on the 31st.

For their services in the war the members of the Company were granted the "Queen's South African Medal" with the following clasps: "Laings Nek," "Transvaal," "Orange Free State," "Cape Colony," "South Africa, 1901."

Captain J. Turnbull was Mentioned in Despatches.

A second Volunteer Company served in South Africa from March 15th, 1901, to June 4th, 1902. The detachment of this furnished by the 4th Volunteer Battalion consisted of Captain J. Cook, Lieutenant J. G. Dixon and 27 men. This Service Company after arrival at Cape Town proceeded to Eden's Kop, joining the 1st Battalion at that place, and held a block house line for about five months. From Eden's Kop the Company moved to Kaffir's Kraal for a fortnight and thence to Hootpoort where for three months it was employed in guarding the railway. Part of the 4th Battalion detachment was sent from here hurriedly to Vaalfontein, but arrived just too late to take part in the engagement there. From Hootpoort the Company was moved to Standerton, and after two weeks here was engaged on convoy duty between Ermelo and Standerton for a month.

This was followed by a tour of duty between Bank Kop and the Swaziland Border, which continued until the departure for England in June, 1902.

A third Volunteer Service Company also served in South Africa from March 7th to July 31st, 1902. A detachment of the 4th Volunteer Battalion joined this Company, but had the misfortune to arrive only two days before the conclusion of Peace and therefore missed taking part in any active operations.

The total number of men who volunteered for service in South Africa from the 4th Volunteer Battalion was 153. Of this number 69 proceeded to the Front with the Service Companies and other 20 joined the Yeomanry. A nominal roll of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Battalion who served in South Africa is contained in Appendix III.

All the cyclists in the Battalion were, on October 1st, 1900, organized into one Company, lettered "L," with its Headquarters at Stanley. The members of this Company, of course, still remained for ordinary drill purposes with their original detachments and were only assembled as a Company during the annual camps.

In October, 1905, the Right Honourable John George, Earl of Durham, was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Battalion.

In 1908 came into being the scheme of Lord Haldane, then Secretary of State for War, under which all the Volunteer Forces were reorganized into the Territorial Force based on a carefully considered plan for the defence of the country, with Divisions and Brigades and their necessary proportion of Artillery, Engineers, Cavalry and Auxiliary Services for each district. Under this scheme the 4th Volunteer Battalion became the 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry, the numerical distinctions of the Battalions now following on from the 1st and 2nd Regular Battalions and the 3rd and 4th Special Reserve Battalions, the number of the Companies being 8. At first the full dress uniform remained the dark green, but service dress (khaki) was introduced. The conditions of training were made more strict and payment during military service, i.e., at the annual camps and on courses, became admissible.

Certain changes in the constitution of the Battalion became necessary under the new conditions, and on April 1st, 1908, the following took effect:

A and B Companies at Durham were merged into one Company .	A
C Company (Bede College Contingent) was re-lettered .	B
E Company at Chester-le-Street became	C
F Company at Birtley became	D
D Company at Beamish became	E

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K Company at Stanley became F
L Company at Stanley was disbanded.
The Company at Washington (absorbing H Co. personnel) became G
and was now stationed at Houghton-le-Spring.
I Company at Sacriston was disbanded.
A new Company was raised at Hamsteels from the A Company
detachment at that station and became H

In February, 1909, many of the men of the Battalion lost their lives in the disaster at West Stanley Pit, and a detachment of officers and men attended their funerals.

On June 19th, 1909, His Majesty King Edward VII presented Colours to the Battalion at Windsor Castle. The Colour party consisted of Lieutenants F. G. Harvey, J. A. S. Ritson, Colour-Sergeants Adams, Lee, Smith, Mewes, Harle and nine other non-commissioned officers and men.

In 1910 authority was given for the adoption of the scarlet uniform as worn by the Regular Battalions of the Regiment, but it was not until the following year that the change was complete.

In June, 1911, a detachment of 27 non-commissioned officers and men under Lieutenant F. Marshall took part in the Coronation ceremony of His Majesty King George V. The Commanding Officer of the Battalion, the officer commanding the detachment, the Quartermaster, the Colour-Sergeant of the detachment and the senior private of the Battalion each received the Coronation Medal.

From 1911 to the outbreak of war in 1914, nothing of note is recorded. The Battalion during these years attended the annual camps, those held from 1908 onwards being increased in duration to 15 days, and there was at no time any difficulty experienced in maintaining the full establishment of officers and other ranks. Weekend camps at Burnhope and Ravensworth became a regular feature of the drill seasons.

On July 25th, 1914, the Battalion proceeded to Conway for the usual annual camp, many vaguely wondering what the next few days would bring forth, for the events in the countries of Europe presaged almost certain war and, in view of the actions of Germany during the last few years covertly directed against this country, quite apart from the question of honour involved in the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium, it seemed that England would in self-defence be drawn into the struggle. And so it proved. Then was seen the result of this country's failure to heed the warnings of those who, led by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, preached the need for some form of compulsory service during all the years that followed the lesson of the South African War. The almost complete occupation of Belgian

THE BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

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 consisted of the Battalion and the King Edward VII presented



Back Row (left to right), Lt. F. A. Leybourne, Capt. J. A. S. Ritson, Capt. F. H. Veitch, Lt. L. A. Ramsay, Lt. J. O. Wilson, Capt. J. Turnbull, Capt. W. H. Coulson, Lt. G. F. Blackett, Lt. J. L. Wood, Lt. R. H. Good, Williams, (Lt. H. J. Nowlan, Rev. C. Lomax, T.D., C.T.F., Rev. E. J. Taylor, T.D., C.T.F., Middle Row (left to right), Capt. F. G. Harvey, Capt. A. Manglen, Capt. W. A. Benson, Major J. H. Smeddle, T.D., Lt.-Col. W. C. Blackett, T.D., Capt.-Adj. G. A. Stevens (Royal Fusiliers), Major J. R. Ritson, T.D., Capt. J. Burgoyne-Johnson, T.D., Capt. T. A. Bradford, Front Row (left to right), Lt. A. Oswald, Lt. W. Johnson, Lt. W. Marshall, Lt. V. Burgoyne-Johnson, Lt. G. D. Gould, Lt. F. C. H. Carpenter, Lt. C. W. Baldwin, Lt. C. L. B. Whall.

8 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

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 G. Harvey, J. A. S. Ritson, Colour-
 Mewes, Harle and nine other non-

is given for the adoption of the scarlet
 Battalions of the Regiment, but it was
 that the change was complete.

of 27 non-commissioned officers and
 all took part in the Coronation
 George V. The Commanding Officer
 the detachment, the Quarter-
 the detachment and the senior private
 the Coronation Medal.

of war in 1914, nothing of note is
 During the years attended the annual
 being increased in duration to
 any difficulty experienced in
 officers and other ranks. Week-
 became a regular feature of

proceeded to Conway for the
 wondering what the next few days
 the countries of Europe presaged
 the actions of Germany during the
 this country, quite apart from
 the maintenance of the neutrality
 would in self-defence be drawn
 Then was seen the result of
 of those who, led by Field-
 the need for some form of
 that followed the lesson of
 complete occupation of Belgian

OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION, CONWAY, AUGUST 1914.



Back Row (left to right). Lt. E. A. Leybourne, Capt. J. A. S. Ritson, Capt. E. H. Veitch, Lt. L. A. Ramsey, Lt. J. O. Wilson, Capt. J. Turnbull, Capt. W. H. Coulson, Lt. G. E. Blackett, Lt. J. L. Wood, Lt. R. H. Guest, Williams, Lt. H. J. Mowlam, Rev. C. Lomax, T.D., C.T.F., Rev. E. J. Taylor, T.D., C.T.F.,
 Middle Row (left to right). Capt. F. G. Harvey, Capt. A. Mangles, Capt. W. A. Benson, Major J. H. Smeddie, T.D., Lt.-Col. W. C. Blackett, T.D., Capt.-Adj. G. A. Stevens, (Royal Fusiliers), Major J. R. Ritson, T.D., Capt. J. Burgoyne-Johnson, T.D., Capt. T. A. Bradford, Lt. G. D. Gould, Lt. F. C. H. Carpenter, Lt. C. W. Baldwin, Lt. C. L. B. Whall,
 Front Row (left to right), Lt. A. Oswell, Lt. W. Johnson, Lt. W. Marshall, Lt. V. Burgoyne-Johnson, Lt. G. D. Gould, Lt. F. C. H. Carpenter, Lt. C. W. Baldwin, Lt. C. L. B. Whall,

Territory and much of France by the Germans, whilst of the great line stretching from the North Sea to the frontier of Switzerland, the British Army, those grand "Contemptibles" only was strong enough to hold some thirty odd miles and that but thinly and with great and unceasing strain on its troops, whilst the bulk of Territorial Battalions were retained in England for the defence of these shores until released in the spring of 1915 by the hurriedly trained new armies.

The story of the happenings in which the Battalion was concerned after the declaration of war belongs to other chapters of this history and in them is, therefore, unfolded.

CHAPTER II

MOBILIZATION AND TRAINING

BY the end of the first week of the annual training at Conway, the Battalion was "standing by" in anticipation of an order to return to its mobilization station, and on the evening of August 3rd entrained at the Conway Morfa Station, arriving in Durham in the early hours of the 4th, and the same day England declared war against Germany. So as in bygone centuries, ere ever the Romans invaded this Island, the British tribes lent their aid to the Belgae, again that help was to be given.

The 4th of August was spent in Durham City, meals for the men being prepared in the Market Place, whilst the officers' mess was arranged for in the Rose and Crown Hotel. As the day wore on and no order to mobilize was received, those who desired to do so were permitted to return to their homes for the night with instructions to report as early as possible the following morning. The actual order to mobilize was received about 7 p.m.

During the afternoon of August 5th the Battalion, less a rear party under Major J. H. Smeddle, T.D., entrained at the North Road Station for Sunderland to take up the position allotted to it in the scheme for the defence of the coast. Detraining at Monkwearmouth, the Companies immediately moved off to their respective sectors. The portion of the coast to be held by the Battalion extended from the pier on the north of the River Wear at Roker to Whitburn Gas Works' village. At this date the Battalion was still organized into eight Companies (the four-Company organization not being authorized for Territorial Battalions till some weeks later), and on arrival at the coast E Company (Beamish) took over a front from the river mouth to Seaside Lane at the northern end of Roker, with Company Headquarters in the old dismantled Battery at Abb's Point. From Seaside Lane to Whitburn Gas Works' village was taken over by D Company (Houghton-le-Spring), with Company Headquarters in a house at Seaside Lane. The remaining Companies were disposed in billets in various parts of Roker and Sunderland in support and reserve. Battalion Headquarters was accommodated in the Thompson Memorial Hall. The strength of



COLONEL W. C. BLACKETT, C.B.E., T.D.
Commanding October, 1912—October, 1914.

CHAPTER II

ARMY COLONIES AND TRAINING

On the 1st of August the Battalion, "on the eve of the annual training at Conway, was 'standing by' in anticipation of an order to report to the railway station, and on the evening of the 4th, at Conway Morfa Station, arriving in North Wales, and the same day England was in the same position as in bygone centuries, ere ever the British tribes lent their aid to the Romans, and the aid to be given.

On the 5th of August, in Durham City, meals for the men were served at the Town Hall, whilst the officers' mess was at the Town Hotel. As the day wore on and the evening came, those who desired to do so were allowed to remain for the night with instructions to report to the following morning. The actual order was given at 7 p.m.

On the 5th of August the Battalion, less a rear column, under the command of Smeddle, T.D., entrained at the North Shields station to take up the position allotted for the defence of the coast. Detraining at the North Shields station, the companies immediately moved off to their respective positions of the coast to be held by the Battalion. On the north of the River Wear at the North Shields village. At this date the Battalion was divided into four companies (the four-Company organization of the Territorial Battalions till some weeks later). The E Company (Beamish) took over a position at Seaside Lane at the northern end of the North Shields village in the old dismantled Battery at the northern end of the lane to Whitburn Gas Works' village (Houghton-le-Spring), with Company F at Seaside Lane. The remaining companies were posted in various parts of Roker and the North Shields. Battalion Headquarters was at the North Shields Memorial Hall. The strength of



COLONEL W. C. BLACKETT, C.B.E., T.D.
Commanding October, 1912—October, 1914.

the Battalion on mobilization was 29 officers and 996 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men, this including 2 medical officers and 2 chaplains.

As soon as tools arrived work on the construction of trenches was started with enthusiasm. Only a few months previously most of the officers had spent a week-end studying the ground they would occupy in the event of an outbreak of war with a European Power and the contingency of an invasion. Little thought was there then that before many weeks had passed they would be actually digging the trenches sited on that occasion. These were exciting days, full of rumour and uncertainty, but the work had an interest and urgency that the annual camps had never held, so in spite of a certain amount of what at the time seemed hardship and discomfort and perhaps at first rather a shortage of rations, the construction of defences went on cheerily. One most exciting experience was the sudden order just before dawn on August 7th to "stand to." As day broke a mist obscured the sea, but this gradually dispersed, and lying immediately off the coast appeared a number of destroyers and submarines; nothing however happened, and soon afterwards they all turned about and returned to the Tyne. On August 9th the 3rd Battalion the Cheshire Regiment arrived and took over the sector, the Battalion then marching to Cleadon and East Boldon to billets, where several uneventful days were spent working on the second line of defence and carrying out training.

Here the rear party left at the Headquarters in Durham, which had been engaged forming the transport, ordinary civilian wagons and horses being commandeered for the purpose, and with recruiting to fill the places of those not passed as fit for service overseas and those who did not take the foreign service obligation, rejoined the Battalion.

On August 16th a move was made to Gateshead, and from thence, on the 19th, to camp in the park of Ravensworth Castle. The site of the camp from a picturesque point of view was charming, the lines being pitched immediately in front of the Castle with its terraced garden, but later on when wet weather became pretty general the ground settled into a quagmire which will not be easily forgotten even after an experience of Flanders' mud. The whole of the Brigade was concentrated here, and training was vigorously carried out on the fell above the camp and in the surrounding countryside.

On September 1st the Battalion moved to Scott's House, near West Boldon, for further work on the defences, a welcome change from the monotony of Ravensworth, and here it was visited by the Earl of Durham, Honorary Colonel of the Battalion. The first steps were now taken to form the Battalion into a unit for foreign service,

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interest in its progress being very greatly sustained by a "thermometer" diagram displayed by the Adjutant outside the Battalion orderly-room. The continued keenness of the men was very remarkable. During all this time they were within but short distances of their homes and families, enduring a discipline to which they were more or less unaccustomed, whilst they daily saw the freedom enjoyed by their friends and other civilians who up to now had not been sufficiently patriotic to take upon themselves the duty of the defence of their country. To this must be added the feeling which increased as time passed that the war would be ended before the Battalion was sent "out." In spite of this the number of absentees was remarkably small, and when it became known that the Battalion was actually under orders to go overseas the immediate return of those who at the time were absent and their fear that as a punishment they might not be allowed to proceed will be remembered by all. Very trying too were the taunts the men endured from acquaintances when visiting their homes, especially as when more than once was the case such a well-founded rumour prevailed throughout the whole of the Brigade as to its departure for the Front that some actually said "good-bye" when leaving home on such occasions.

After three weeks at Scott's House a return was made on September 23rd to Ravensworth. A change took place in the command of the Battalion on October 16th, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull, V.D., who had previously commanded but whose term had been completed prior to 1914, took over from Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Blackett, T.D., who was medically unfit for foreign service. Lieutenant-Colonel Blackett's connection with the Battalion did not, however, entirely cease, for he was given the task of raising the second line Battalion and left behind him in the first line his son, Captain G. E. Blackett, the third generation of the family to serve in it. After the war the G.O.C. Northern Command compiled a record for long family service in the units forming his command, and so far as it was possible to discover from inquiry and the available records, this was the only case where three generations of a family served with the 8th and its predecessor the 4th Volunteer Battalion Durham Light Infantry.

The camp at Ravensworth was now pitched upon new ground in the park, some distance from the Castle and, except that it entailed a longer walk into Gateshead and Newcastle, was perhaps a better site; certainly it did not prove so muddy. Here owing to the shortage of tents some of the Companies were accommodated in very large marquees, one of which was entirely wrecked during a very stormy night in October. Numbers of the men took their blankets into a neighbouring plantation, whilst others were squeezed in with



COLONEL J. TURNBULL, C.M.G., V.D.
Commanding October, 1914—May, 1917.

1ST BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

being very greatly sustained by a "thermometer" held by the Adjutant outside the Battalion orderly room. The keenness of the men was very remarkable. As they were within but short distances of their friends, enduring a discipline to which they were unaccustomed, whilst they daily saw the freedom of their friends and other civilians who up to now had not been patriots to take upon themselves the duty of the country. To this must be added the feeling which was passed that the war would be ended before the end of the year. In spite of this the number of absentees was small. When it became known that the Battalion was to go overseas the immediate return of the men to their homes and their fear that as a punishment for desertion they would proceed will be remembered by all. The men endured from acquaintances and friends the same treatment as when more than once was the case. Their spirit prevailed throughout the whole of the war. For the Front that some actually said they would go on such occasions.

At Scott's House a return was made on 1st January 1916. A change took place in the command of the Battalion. The 16th, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull, who had commanded but whose term had been completed, took over from Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Blackett who was medically unfit for foreign service. Blackett's connection with the Battalion did not end there, for he was given the task of raising the Battalion and left behind him in the first line of the Battalion. H. Blackett, the third generation of the family, was the O.C. Northern Command compiled a list of the men in the units forming his command, and discovered from inquiry and the available records that where three generations of a family had served, the predecessor the 4th Volunteer Battalion

The Battalion was now pitched upon new ground, away from the Castle and, except that it was still in the same old shed and Newcastle, was perhaps a little more comfortable. Here owing to the fact that the Companies were accommodated in very different places, it was entirely wrecked during a very heavy rain. The men took their blankets and coats, whilst others were squeezed in with



COLONEL J. TURNBULL, C.M.G., V.D.
Commanding October, 1914—May, 1917.

other Companies and into the officers' mess hut for the rest of the night. Some very hardy, or perhaps very lazy, remained under the fallen canvas. A welcome variation of the training at this period was a three days' trek by Companies, each Company independently being allowed to select their own route and perform a circular march with a bivouac each night.

As time went on the weather became generally cold and wet, and it was with a feeling of relief that the Brigade moved into billets in Gateshead where it remained until its departure for the Front in April, 1915. The months here were spent in strenuous manner, "standing to" in full marching order before dawn on a bleak piece of waste ground by the road leading out from Gateshead to the coast, long marches to and from the training area. Who will forget Lobley Hill with a full pack after a hard field day? One man at least had not, for as long afterwards as March, 1918, during the retreat of the Fifth Army from St. Quentin, he was heard to say he wished he could see Lobley Hill and that he would never grouse at it again.

So the weary waiting went on: a raid by the Germans in the North Sea and the bombardment of Scarborough, Whitby and Hartlepool on December 16th, leading to the fear that the Division would never be allowed to leave the country. Christmas arrived with a special dinner for the men, and passed, and the weeks of 1915 slipped away. Captain W. C. Benson left the Battalion early in the year, transferring to the Royal Army Medical Corps and being given command of one of the field ambulances of the 50th Division. At last early in April, the hoped-for orders to join the British Expeditionary Force were received. The days that followed were full of final preparations and farewells. On April 17th the transport and machine-gun detachment departed via Southampton en route for Le Havre, followed on Monday, the 19th, by the Battalion which was to cross by the shorter route, Folkestone-Boulogne.

Of the journey to Folkestone only somewhat hazy recollections now remain. All were probably much too excited for any incidents to leave a very deep impression, and the eventful days which quickly followed dulled even these. It is easy to recall the crowds lining the way from the billets in Gateshead to the Central Station, Newcastle-on-Tyne, which was left soon after 11 a.m. and the platforms of the stations through which the train passed. The carriages, after the manner of troop trains of those days, were soon adorned with appropriate legends in chalk such as, "Berlin Express," and "Bede v. Kaiser." After the excitement of the good-bye—one ought to write "Au revoir," for as the French Red Cross nurse at Boulogne, when collecting for the French wounded from the leave trains, used to remark if one said "good-bye" to her, "Mais non, au revoir; good-

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bye, no bon"—it was a tedious journey. A little interest was aroused when Lincoln and March were passed, occasioning some conjecture as to the actual destination of the Battalion which up to then had been understood to be Boulogne, and several debated the prospect of an attempted landing at Ostend or elsewhere on the Belgian coast to outflank the German line. At March, where the train stopped for a few minutes, one exuberant member of the Battalion astonished the station staff by leaping on to the platform and demanding if this was France; and one man became notorious by losing his cap out of the window and so landed in France bare-headed. Eventually Liverpool Street was reached, where there was a short halt and some most welcome tea was served. As it was now dark and the carriages were unlighted, most slept the remaining distance to Folkestone, where from the train, which ran down on to the landing-stage, embarkation upon the *Onward* was only a matter of a few minutes. Soon only the momentary flashing of the lighthouse in the harbour remained to mark where England lay. Gradually this dimmed and passed.

After a calm, uneventful crossing Boulogne was reached at 1 a.m. on Tuesday, April 20th, its brilliantly lighted landing-stage contrasting strangely with the semi-darkness of Folkestone. Here the Battalion disembarked and was met by Major J. R. Ritson, who had preceded it by two or three days, and was soon on its way up the long rough road to bivouac at Ostrovhe on the hill above the town.

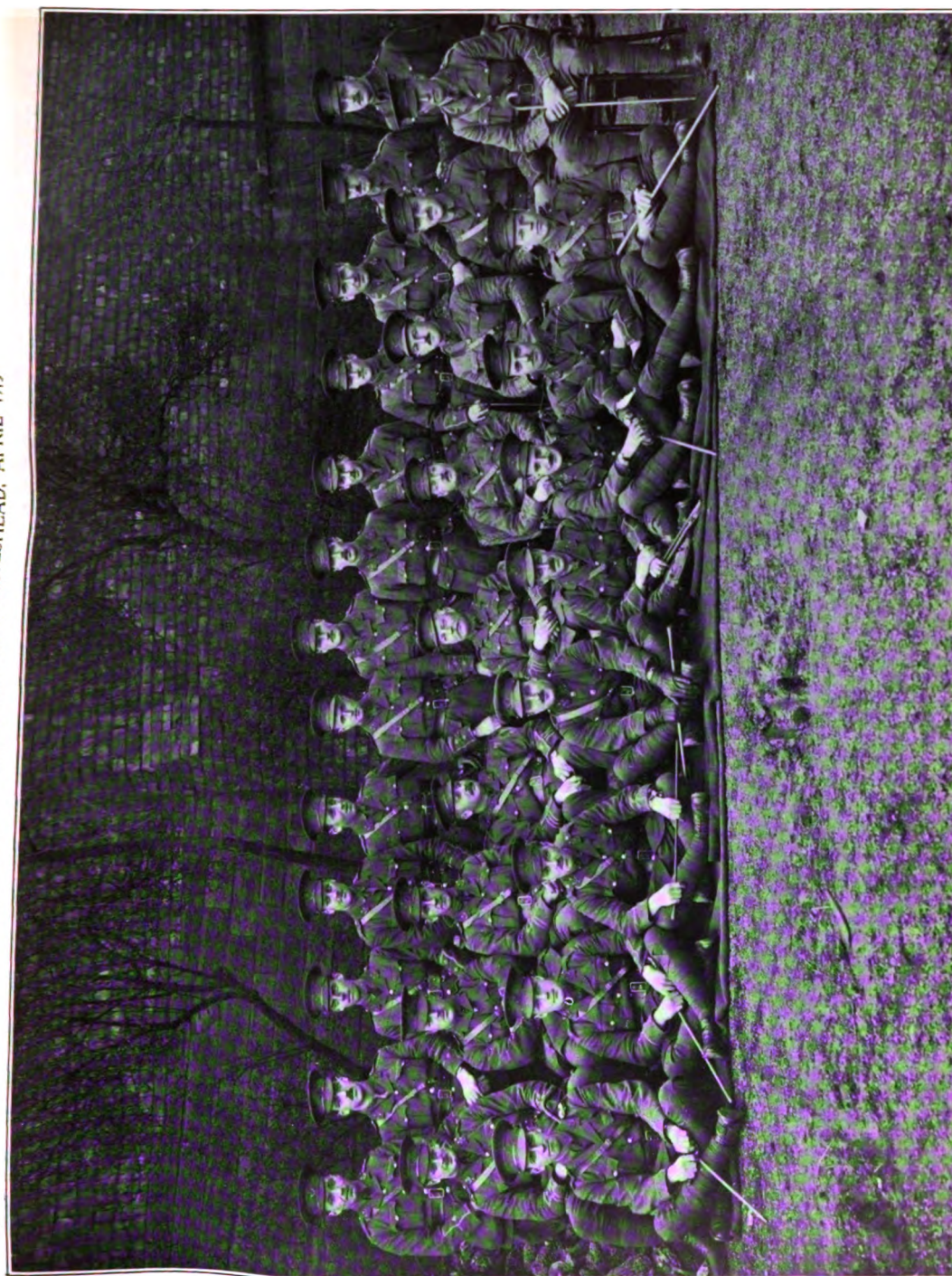
THE 1ST BATTALION DUBHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

the first of the long journey. A little interest was aroused when the train passed through Marseilles, occasioning some conjecture as to the destination of the 1st Battalion which up to then had been supposed to be bound for the front, and several debated the prospect of an expedition to the United States or elsewhere on the Belgian coast to attack the German ships. At Marseilles, where the train stopped for a few minutes, an eccentric member of the Battalion astonished the other soldiers by jumping on to the platform and demanding if this was the train which had become notorious by losing his cap out of the window when it was in France bare headed. Eventually Liverpool

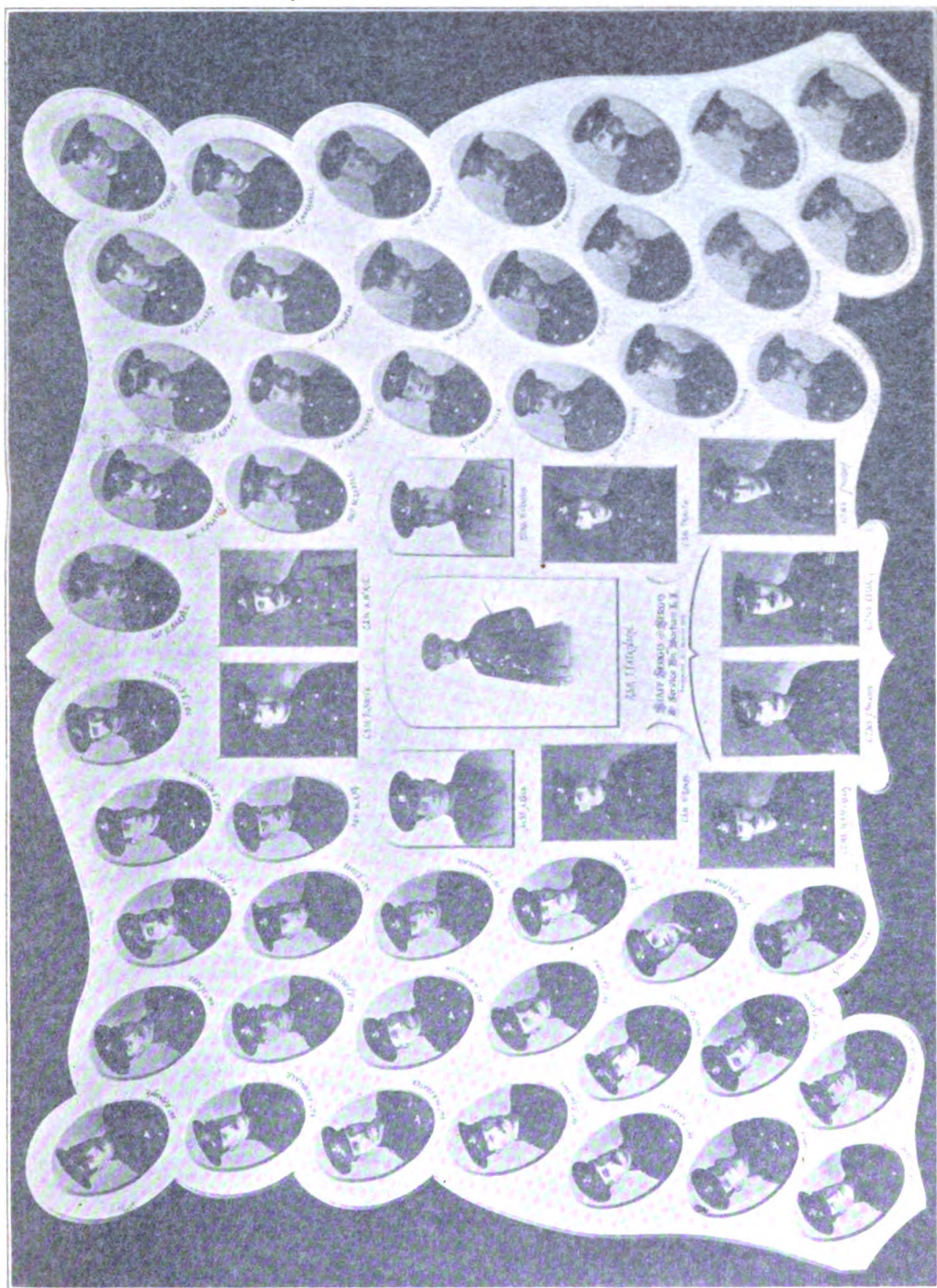
was reached. There was a short halt and some most uncomfortable passengers got out. It was now dark and the carriages were moving rapidly over the remaining distance to Folkestone, where they arrived on to the landing-stage, embarkation taking place in a matter of a few minutes. Soon only the lighthouse in the harbour remained to mark the entrance, and this dimmed and passed.

The crossing Boulogne was reached at 1 a.m. The brightly lighted landing-stage contrasted sharply with the darkness of Folkestone. Here the Battalion was met by Major J. R. Ritson, who had been in the town for days, and was soon on its way up the long hill to the barracks on the hill above the town.

OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION, GATESHEAD, APRIL 1915



Back Row (left to right). Lt. J. N. O. Rogers, Lt. J. O. Wilson, Lt. W. Johnson, Lt. J. L. Wood, Lt. G. E. Blackett, Lt. P. Kirkup, Lt. T. F. Callinan, Capt. W. Marshall
 Lt. A. W. Nesbitt, Lt. Sisson, Lt. L. A. Ramsay, Lt. E. H. Motum, Capt. J. A. Stenhouse, R.A.M.C.
 Middle Row (left to right). Capt. W. H. Coulson, Capt. J. A. S. Ritson, Capt. F. G. Harvey, Major J. H. Smeddle, T.D., Lt.-Col. J. Turnbull, V.D., Capt. W. A. Benson, T.D.,
 Capt. T. A. Bradford, Capt. J. Turnbull, Capt. E. H. Veitch.
 Front Row (left to right). 2nd Lt. Blair, Lt. C. L. B. Whall, Lt. F. M. Weeks, Lt. J. R. Brass, Lt. A. Ritson, Lt. E. A. Leybourne, Capt. V. Burgoyne-Johnson,
 Lt. C. W. Baldwin.
 (Major J. R. Ritson, T.D., absent in France).
 (Capt. G. A. Stevens, absent on duty).



GATESHEAD, APRIL

CHAPTER III

FIRST DAYS WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE. THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES

ABOUT midday on April 20th, the Battalion marched from the camp at Ostrovo to Pont des Briques, a distance of some three miles, where on arrival of the train from Le Havre conveying the transport and the machine-gun detachment which, leaving Gateshead on April 17th, had crossed from Southampton, entrainment was quickly carried out in spite of the lack of experience in finding sufficient space for forty "hommes" with full equipment in a horse box.

After a leisurely journey in the way of French troop trains, with distant glimpses of Griz Nez and Calais, St. Omer was reached. Here orders were received to continue to Cassel, where eventually the Battalion arrived about 7 p.m., detraining at a small station a little to the north-west of Cassel, and marching to billets in and about St. Marie Capelle. Some difficulty was experienced in finding these in the dark, as they were scattered and the directions of the Staff Officer who met the Battalion and was also new to the country were somewhat vague, but at last all were settled in. Amongst their first impressions the warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of one Company will remember the embarrassing situation which arose when the ladies of the household retired for the night through the room in which they were preparing themselves for bed. Most of the following day seemed to be spent in writing and censoring of letters home and in a general survey of the new surroundings.

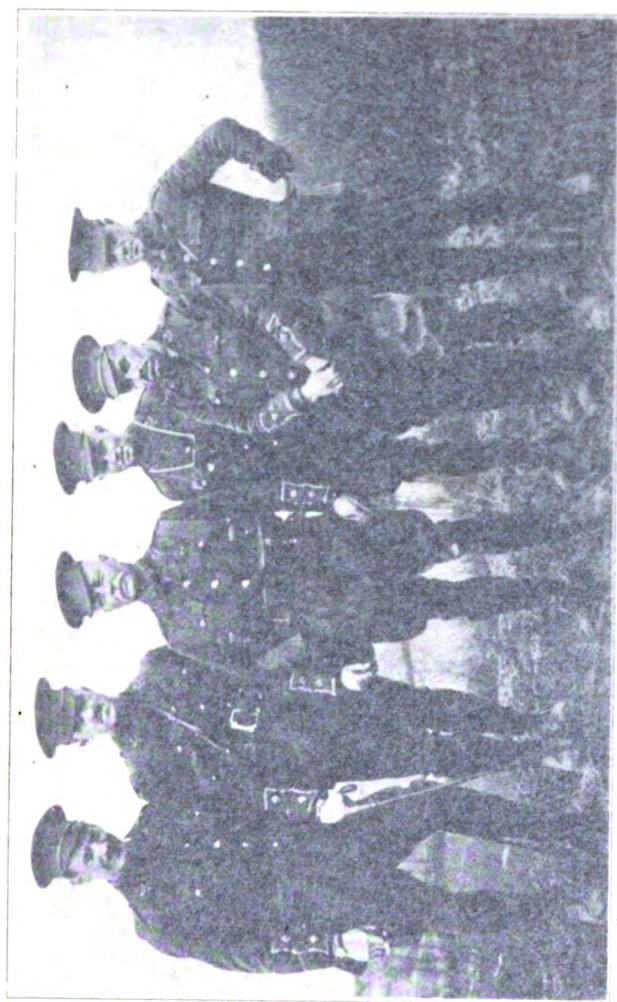
Cassel is a very picturesque little town on a hill, the same hill up which and down again, it is reputed, a certain Duke of York once marched ten thousand men. The hill is the most westerly of a chain of hills soon to become familiar, Mont des Cats, Mont Noir, Mont Rouge and Kemmel, each of which has its place in this record of the Battalion. In April, 1915, Cassel was the Headquarters of the Second French Army under General Foch (General Joffre at this time being Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies), and so was out of bounds to British troops and it was, therefore, not till the later stages of the war that there was any opportunity of exploring it and becoming

acquainted with that very popular estaminet, "La Belle Sauvage." Throughout the day the distant guns could be plainly heard, and after dark the whole horizon to the north was constantly lit by their flashes.

The Battalion was not destined to make a gradual entry into the fighting, for on April 23rd orders were received to move forward at once. At 1.45 p.m. all the Companies had concentrated on the road a little to the north of Cassel, and the Battalion marched to Riveld where it was ordered to continue to Steenvoorde. On arrival here large numbers of French troops were seen being hurriedly conveyed north in motor lorries, and the sound of heavy continuous artillery fire made it evident that a serious engagement was in progress. At 5 p.m. the Battalion moved forward from Steenvoorde for Poperinghe in two parties in motor buses, still bearing the familiar advertisements carried by them when running in the London streets, crossing on the way at Abeele the frontier into Belgium. At Poperinghe further orders were received to go on to Vlamertinghe, which was reached at 11 p.m. Here it was ascertained that the French had been attacked by the Germans, who, by the use of poisonous gases, had broken the line. A Canadian Division had filled the gap thus made and were winning back the lost ground in very gallant style. Very heavy artillery fire could be heard, and Ypres was reported to be heavily shelled. After leaving Poperinghe the Vêry lights rising from the line became visible, and through them could be traced the whole outline of "The Salient." The transport which had followed arrived about 2 a.m., and the night was spent in billets and the out-buildings of a convent at the west end of the town.

All through the 24th the heavy artillery fire continued, the Battalion "stood by," and at 6.30 p.m. moved forward, the first of the 50th Division to go into action.

Up the long road with its seemingly never-ending stream of wounded struggling back over the rough pave, terror-stricken refugees bearing with them their most treasured possessions, hurrying guns and limbers, here and there the fallen horses of an unlucky gun team caught by a shell, at some cross-roads a dead Belgian girl together with the bodies of two cows she had been driving to safety. On into Ypres with its smouldering ruins almost blocking the narrow Rue au Beurre, the fallen fronts of the houses exposing their interiors, some with still the last unfinished meal set out on the tables, across the desolate Grande Place by the Cloth Hall and out through the Menin Gate close by the burning Church of St. Jacques. On through Potijze, Velorenhoek and Frezenberg to the Level Crossing (Devil's Crossing) of the Ypres-Roulers railway where the road was left and the Battalion groped its way up a narrow track alongside and under cover of the railway embankment into Zonnebeke, near its station, and



Lieut. E. A. Leybourne Capt. J. L. Linnell
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The transport which had followed arrived about 4.30 p.m. The night was spent in billets and the out-buildings of a farm at the east end of the town.

On the 24th the heavy artillery fire continued, the Battalion was "held by," and at 6.30 p.m. moved forward, the first of the Battalion to go into action.

On the long road with its seemingly never-ending stream of refugees, struggling back over the rough pave, terror-stricken refugees carrying their most treasured possessions, hurrying guns and ammunition, the most recent fallen horses of an unlucky gun team were seen. At the cross-roads a dead Belgian girl together with her mother lay where she had been driving to safety. On into Ypres the Battalion moved, the ruins almost blocking the narrow Rue au Pommier. In some of the houses exposing their interiors, some with the table set out on the tables, across the street, and out through the Cloth Hall and out through the Menin Church of St. Jacques. On through the Church of St. Frezenberg to the Level Crossing (Devil's Den) where the road was left and the Battalion moved up a narrow track alongside and under the railway where the road was left and moved into Zonnebeke, near its station, and



Lieut. E. A. Leybourne	Capt. J. Turnbull	Lieut.-Col. J. Turnbull	Lieut. P. Kirkup	Lieut. F. M. Weeks	Lieut. C. L. B. Whall
CASSEL, FRANCE.					
April, 1915					

so into the fight. Almost three years later when, after the third Battle of Ypres, the Battalion marched this self-same road up into Passchendaele, of Potijze, Velorenhoeck and Frezenberg only memories remained.

Although several shells fell in Ypres whilst the Battalion was passing through, Potijze was reached about 10 p.m. without any casualties. Orders were there received to push on to Velorenhoeck and to report to Brigadier-General Chapman, commanding the 85th Infantry Brigade (28th Division). On arrival here the Battalion was ordered to move about four hundred yards east of the village, extend on either side of the road and there await morning. There was some delay at Velorenhoeck before those orders were received, during which the Battalion very thankfully rested along the roadside. No shells were falling near but were constantly passing over and bursting behind. In spite of the ordeal of the march through Ypres and being under shell-fire for the first time the spirits of the men were in no way damped. Through the darkness came the voice of some irrepressible Bede College member of A Company as a shell passed over: "Aye, it reminds yer o' Durham Regatta. Now, lads, up goes another! All together! Bang! Mind the stick!" Then some one called, "Who's won the Grand?" and there were rival cries of "City" and "Bede." At 11.30 p.m., however, further orders were received to proceed to the Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers on the Zonnebeke-St. Julien road, where a guide was to be obtained to lead the Battalion to some trenches which were reported to have been dug by a Canadian Battalion but left unfinished by them. Although the tool carts had not yet come up, the Battalion at once moved off and proceeded through Zonnebeke and thence north-west. Progress was very slow owing to darkness, bad roads and many obstacles. Part of C Company which was marching last became separated from the rest of the Battalion in passing through Zonnebeke, but after a few anxious moments again got in touch.

On arrival at the 3rd Royal Fusiliers Headquarters the orders were explained to Major Johnson then commanding that Battalion. He, however, stated that the position the Battalion was ordered to was quite untenable and that, moreover, it would be quite impossible to entrench it before daylight, especially as the men's small entrenching tools only were available. On the situation being explained by telephone to the 85th Infantry Brigade, the Battalion was instead ordered to proceed to a position held by the 8th Canadian Battalion (Winnipeg Rifles—Little Black Devils) under Lieutenant-Colonel Lipsett at Boetleer's Farm.

It was now nearly 2 a.m. The Battalion immediately moved off to relieve the Canadians who were reported to have lost heavily and

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to be much exhausted. Passing through a farm filled with Canadian wounded, the pack animals were left and the ammunition taken on by hand. The position at Boetleer's Farm was reached about 3 a.m. on Sunday, April 25th.

There was great difficulty on arrival in obtaining a clear idea of the situation, there being no plan of the position or system of defence, but the following message sent by the 8th Canadian Battalion to the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade prior to the Battalion reaching Boetleer's Farm at 3 a.m. throws some light on the situation existing at the time.

" 12.00 *Midnight.*

" 8th Battalion to 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade.

" We hold our trenches and some of the 15th. I have two platoons in front of Battalion Headquarters to protect my left rear so we have a bad gap between us and locality 'C.' I have only 20 men in this gap. I can hold my line providing the Germans do not get round my left rear, but it is a very bad situation unless we can get troops to fill the gap from Battalion Headquarters to locality 'C.' If you are sending me reinforcements let them come to just south of Battalion Headquarters. Let me have instructions as to whether it is intended to hold this line or not. Have just heard German advance against our left seems to have slackened and come to a halt. I am not uneasy about being able to hold my line if Germans are prevented working round my rear."

It is through the kindly interest of General Edmonds, Director of the Historical Section (Military Branch), Committee of Imperial Defence, that the above message is available for inclusion here.

As will be seen from the accompanying sketch plan adapted from a drawing made by the Adjutant, Captain G. A. Stevens, during the action, the Canadian trenches centred upon a group of farm buildings (Boetleer's Farm) (8) (9) which were in ruins from shell-fire. These occupied the highest ground. To the north-west the ground sloped gently down, but observation was much restricted by small clumps of brushwood and hedges. Towards Keerselaare and the line of the Stroombeek the ground rose again and there were some fairly large fields. To the east was a large open field leading across a narrow valley to a ridge some twelve to fourteen hundred yards distant. Westwards the ground fell away gradually with a good field of fire, the crest line of this side being between the trenches (4), (5) and trench (6). The field (7) was enclosed by a thick hedge, and at its north-west corner adjoining the farm buildings was a small orchard which, on the arrival of the Battalion, was strewn with bodies stripped of their

uniforms. From point (10) on the St. Julien-Fortuin-Passchendaele road a thick hedge ran southwards.

The Canadian Headquarters had been stationed at the farm buildings. These on examination were found to be full of Canadian wounded in great need of attention owing to their Medical Officer having been killed. Though protected with sandbags the buildings were totally unsuitable for any purpose, as they were constantly shelled and partly destroyed. However, for the time being Battalion Headquarters was established here.

As dawn was breaking the following dispositions were rapidly made: A Company (Captain F. G. Harvey) and D Company (Captain T. A. Bradford) were ordered to occupy trenches (1) and (2), relieving the Canadians holding these. B Company (Major J. R. Ritson) and C Company (Captain J. A. S. Ritson) were ordered to entrench themselves as quickly as possible along the hedges of the field (7), there being no cover available for these two Companies, trench (3) being occupied by a small detachment of Monmouths whilst trenches (4) and (5) were held by some Canadians. A Platoon of B Company (Lieutenant F. M. Weeks) was, however, placed in the south end of trench (6) with a machine-gun at the south-west corner together with the few Canadians who were relieved from trenches (1) and (2).

The German positions varied from about eighty to two hundred and fifty yards in distance from trenches (1) and (2), the "No Man's Land" between being covered with young corn and mustard. About five hundred yards away to the north-west they also held a trench reported to have been dug by the Canadians but evacuated by them when found to be too isolated. From here there was a gap of some two or three hundred yards, and then the German trenches began again opposite trenches (3), (4) and (5).

Leaving Boetleer's Farm with a Canadian as guide, D Company, followed closely by A Company, moved over the crest of the ridge and then in a north-easterly direction down a gradual slope. After crossing two or three fields, in one of which were several unoccupied trenches, passing a ruined farm nearby which was a trench containing several dead, and crossing a stream, eventually they reached on slightly rising ground a line of trenches held by some weak Companies of the 7th and 8th Canadian Battalions. Turning left into this, D Company, still leading, filed along for a distance of some two hundred yards, then through a length used as a communication trench partly filled with water into a trench (2) beyond also held by the Canadians. A Company remained in the trench first entered, i.e., (1) on the right, or eastern side of the communication trench.

Though by this time it was broad daylight, it was most remarkable

that no fire was opened on the Companies, for the German trench facing the point where they entered the Canadian trench was no more than eighty yards away, and to their strained imagination the noise made by the wash of the water carried by them in petrol tins was in itself alone sufficient to draw attention. Possibly after their efforts of the 24th the Germans were sleeping at the moment, but there it was, the position was occupied without a shot being fired.

The trenches, both (1) and (2), had obviously been held by the French at some time, for a number of bodies were buried in and around them, so little below the surface that they could be felt under the feet, and the shell-fire during the day that followed threw many of these up, scattering them in all directions, when it was seen that they were French Colonials.

They were shallow trenches with a fair breastwork partly loop-holed, but the traverses were incomplete and there was no protection in their rear, the lack of which was responsible for many casualties from the back blast of the shells bursting behind, and during the day even the breastwork gradually failed them, being blown in along much of its length together with a number of the dug-outs and burying the wounded where they lay waiting till darkness set in for succour—if the trench could be held till then. Nor were there in these early days steel helmets to protect against overhead shrapnel. The dug-outs, of which there were a number, were filled with Canadian dead, wounded and gassed, mostly the latter. Owing to the light it was impossible to remove any of these, and of the few Canadians holding the trenches but a small number were able to get away. They had been holding the position for some days. Much has been written in other records of their gallantry—let this be added to them here, they were good fellows, and fearless, officers and men alike. The trenches were well supplied with ammunition, periscopes and food. There was very little wire in front.

As the main and decisive German attack on the 25th developed from the gap existing on D Company's left flank the story of that Company will be taken first.

Trench (2), as we have seen, was connected with A Company on the right in trench (1) by a communication trench. Its left flank was drawn back at right angles for a distance of fifty or sixty yards. In the angle thus formed was a Canadian machine-gun. A portion of the trench, about its centre, was a communication trench, and two platoons were placed on each side of this. There was considerable dead ground on the left flank, but owing to a fold in the ground this did not become apparent till later on. About a thousand yards away to the north-west was a large wood. Boetleer's Farm was not visible from any part of the trench owing to the formation of the

ground. The German position was from two hundred to two hundred and fifty yards distant in front.

Lieutenant McLeod, commanding the Canadians in trench (2), now occupied by D Company, offered to remain together with his machine-guns and their teams (D Company being without any guns, though they had brought some gunners and belts of ammunition which, however, could not be used with the Canadian machine-guns being of a different pattern), also his signallers, and ordered the rest of his men to make their way back to Boetleer's Farm, which but few ever reached.

Soon after 3.30 a.m. heavy rifle fire opened from the west, lasting for about thirty minutes when it died down, and during the remainder of the early morning fire was only intermittent from this direction, whilst from the north there was little more than sniping. Between 8 and 9 a.m. a German aeroplane flew low along over the trench, dropping silver paper in spite of being fired at, and half an hour later heavy shelling opened and continued. One of the first shells struck the telephone dug-out, killing the operator and destroying the instrument. Communication with Battalion Headquarters by this means was never re-established. Casualties from the shell-fire were constant and heavy. Lieutenant J. N. O. Rogers and Lieutenant B. S. Richardson were wounded early on. The latter, lying in the dug-out to which he was carried, found there a jar of rum, a quantity of which in his thirst and agony he consumed, thereby becoming stupefied and apparently dead and as such he was reported. He recovered consciousness, however, when the Germans captured the trench in the evening but died a few weeks later in a German hospital. Many men were killed and wounded, and one of the Canadian machine-guns was knocked out, all its team being killed or wounded, for the trench gave but little shelter save from rifle fire in front.

During the morning the Germans from about eighteen hundred yards to the left twice advanced in waves, and though they suffered from shrapnel continued to advance, eventually disappearing over a crest to the rear of the left flank. At 10.30 a.m. what apparently amounted to two Companies of Germans appeared some four thousand yards distant to the north-west; these on coming under fire retired. As Captain Bradford felt much uneasiness with regard to his left flank and his casualties were increasingly heavy, he sent Lieutenant McLeod to report the situation to Battalion Headquarters. The shelling became intense about 12.30 p.m., and from then onwards, save during the intervals of the German Infantry attacks, never ceased till night.

About 2 p.m. scouts who had gone out to the north-west reported that the Germans were collecting in some dead ground in that direction. These could not be seen from trench (2) nor were they

observed from Boetleer's Farm. Shortly afterwards they advanced, but fire was opened on them at six hundred yards, and they were stopped, but now D Company was enfiladed by rifle-fire, and as the Germans appeared to be working farther and farther round the left flank Captain Bradford extended a section in the open amongst some mustard to prolong his flank and at the same time ordered Lieutenant J. O. Wilson with a patrol to work up a fence to a farmhouse in the rear. All the patrol, after a sharp fight at the farm, were killed or wounded, Lieutenant Wilson himself being wounded and taken prisoner.

Three trains now drew up four thousand yards away to the north on the Ypres-Staden Railway, full of German Infantry who immediately detrained, and at 3.30 p.m. large numbers were seen three thousand yards distant to the north in close order but beginning to extend and move south. These were also observed from Boetleer's Farm, and as they came into range Lieutenant E. H. Motum with his machine-guns got to work on them, and though drawing heavy fire, emptied belt after belt into the exceptional target offered.

A determined attack by the German Infantry now developed. After the long hours of shelling they had endured this came somewhat in the nature of a relief to the men, who faced it steadily, and under their rapid fire and that of the one remaining machine-gun the grey-clad figures doubling across No Man's Land halted, turned and melted away. Captain V. Burgoyne-Johnson, though mortally wounded, asked for a rifle to be given him, and continued firing until he died. Lieutenant W. Marshall was killed and many non-commissioned officers and men were killed and wounded. Company Quartermaster-Sergeant Briggs seemed to be everywhere encouraging the men, and he and Private Borthwick set a fine example of bravery both in this attack and throughout the day. Private Borthwick unfortunately was killed by shrapnel shortly before the trench was evacuated in the evening.

After the failure of their infantry to capture the trench a heavy bombardment again began, under cover of which the Germans continued to work round its left flank and rear. About 5 p.m. some hundred German cyclists came along a road on the left from the direction of Langemarcke until they were five or six hundred yards away, when, rapid fire being opened on them, they jumped from their machines and took cover.

The remaining machine-gun was knocked out at 5.30 p.m., and when its fire ceased the Germans again advanced in a most determined manner. Captain Bradford, himself wounded, had now only Lieutenant J. L. Wood and about thirty men left, but though the Germans approached quite close, their further advance was completely

stopped by the fire of this small party. During the lull that followed a supply of rum found in the trench was issued.

At 6 p.m. the German artillery fire increased in intensity, and a little later, ammunition being almost exhausted, communication with Battalion Headquarters impossible and the trench being surrounded, Captain Bradford decided to attempt a retirement. Lieutenant J. L. Wood, with about half the men still left, was ordered to work along to the right in the direction of A Company and take up a position if possible at a belt of trees to the right rear, whilst Captain Bradford, with the remaining men, stayed to cover the movement. About five minutes later, as this covering party followed, a heavy bombardment with shrapnel opened; this killed and wounded several, and Captain Bradford, bringing up the rear, was again hit but slightly and then found himself alone. Making his way along the trench, he found Lieutenant J. L. Wood lying wounded close by Lieutenant J. N. O. Rogers; both were unable to move. After remaining with them for a short time he went on and entered trench (1) to confer with Captain Harvey who had still a few men left as well as a machine-gun. Almost immediately the Germans entered trench (2), which now only held dead and wounded. It was decided that Captain Bradford should endeavour to reach Battalion Headquarters and report the position whilst A Company hung on. He reached the belt of trees to which Lieutenant Wood's party had been ordered, but found it unoccupied. From here as soon as the shrapnel and rifle-fire which was sweeping the ground from the east eased up he made his way in the direction of where he believed Battalion Headquarters was situated, but failed to find it, and eventually by a roadside came to a dug-out which proved to be an aid-post where his wounds were dressed, and he then set out to find Brigade Headquarters. The losses sustained by D Company throughout the day amounted to 7 officers and 173 non-commissioned officers and men, killed, wounded or missing.

Now follows the tale of A Company.

As soon as D Company was clear of trench (1) Captain Harvey took over from a Major of the 8th Canadian Battalion, his name cannot now be recalled, who then withdrew his men but left his machine-guns and their teams. There still remained, however, on the extreme right a number of the 7th Canadian Battalion who were not relieved. It was found after the relief was complete that the Canadians had removed their telephone, and as A Company was minus an instrument the only means of communication with Battalion Headquarters was by runners.

Many dead, wounded and gassed still lay in the trench, for it had been impossible to remove all owing to the repeated attempts to capture it made by the Germans during the night. A Canadian officer

stated that the position was practically untenable and that it was with the greatest difficulty they had repulsed the last frontal attack.

A somewhat curious coincidence on taking over the Company Headquarters' dug-out was the finding there of an envelope addressed to a Captain Harvey of the Canadians.

Between the trench and the Germans, who were on slightly higher ground, was a field of tares and young corn, but there was little to see, and it was impossible to discover where lay the nearest British trenches to the right. Owing to the rain overnight the trench was very muddy, and great difficulty was experienced in keeping the rifles fit for use. All were wet through, but the sun which soon became hot quickly dried every one. It was difficult on so fine a spring morning with larks singing overhead to realize that one was actually awaiting an attack, the real thing at last.

After the Company got settled in the men started firing odd shots at the German trench which in parts, on the crest of a small ridge, was as close as eighty yards. There was a little firing in return by the Germans, only enough to make the men keep their heads down, and the opportunity was taken to have some food and a short rest.

The first incident of note was the circling over the trench of a German aeroplane at which the men fired, and soon afterwards shells were seen bursting on Battalion Headquarters at Boetleer's Farm. A little later the trench itself came under very accurate shell-fire directed by an aeroplane flying constantly above. No British planes were seen, and there appeared to be but little artillery support from the British batteries. One gun was observed to come into action from behind a farm about a mile to the right rear, but after firing only two rounds the German Artillery shelled the buildings, from which a cloud arose and the gun fired no more.

Away on the left a large number of troops, at first thought to be French on account of their blue uniforms but later on recognized as Germans, were seen crossing a railway, marching in close order, ultimately disappearing behind a wood. They made a splendid target for artillery had there been any. When next they came into sight they were extending and coming up in the direction of the rear of the left flank where they began to dig in carrying sleepers from the railway. D Company got busy on them at this moment.

The German Artillery now got going in earnest, and seemed to have the exact range of the trench. Casualties were very heavy mainly owing to the lack of protection in the rear. Under cover of this the German Infantry got fairly close up into a long thin strip of trees and some farm buildings. In spite of the shrapnel which swept the trench continually rifle-fire was kept going at every target that offered, and so the day passed on. Evidently dead beat, a man was observed, during

one severe bout of shelling, sound asleep. "I had not the heart to waken him," said his Company Commander, "and even envied him."

Late in the afternoon a message was received from Captain Bradford stating that D Company in trench (2) could not hold out much longer as the Germans were in their rear, and later a few men of that Company were seen doubling back over the open in the rear of A Company. Most of them fell under the hail of shrapnel.

Part of A Company trench had by now become untenable, there being no cover left, and the men were moved from here to the part held by the 7th Canadians where a hedge afforded a certain amount of protection, and here was seen perhaps the most outstanding in its heroism of the many courageous acts of this first stern day of fighting. Corporal J. M. Watson lay wounded in an exposed position crying for water. A bottle was thrown to him but fell beyond his reach. Seeing this, Private J. H. Atkinson left his shelter to give his comrade the water he needed, and gave his life in the attempt. Casualties still continued heavy, very many men being hit, and as the Germans pushed nearer and nearer the position became impossible, the only hope being to hold on until dark.

The shrapnel fire became more and more intense for a time, when it ceased and a bombardment with high explosive followed; fortunately many of the shells were "duds." The farm building immediately behind was repeatedly hit, its stones being scattered in all directions. C.S.M. E. Lee with a party was sent down a hedge in an attempt to stop the Germans working up a strip of woodland, but all were soon killed or wounded. Heavy rifle-fire was still kept up, Lieutenant T. Callinan and Sergeant Price being very conspicuous at this time encouraging the men and directing fire. One of the Canadian machine-guns in action manned by Lance-Corporal R. H. Robson and Private J. Huggins, who had taken the gun over when all the Canadian gunners had become casualties, was eventually knocked out, Huggins being killed and Robson dying of his wounds a few days later at a German dressing-station.

The German Infantry was now very close and the artillery fire ceased for a time, and a few men of D Company, followed a little after by Captain Bradford, entered the trench. After a consultation Captain Bradford set out to find Battalion Headquarters; several runners had previously been sent but apparently none of these got through. One did actually reach Battalion Headquarters with a message to the effect that A Company was hard pressed and might have to retire, to which a reply was sent that the Company must hold on at all costs and that reinforcements were reported to be coming up. This reply however, never reached Captain Harvey. A number of Canadians also moved off.

A Company continued to hold on, and now manned an old ditch running towards the rear on the left in an endeavour to hold up the Germans who had entered D Company's old trench which now only held dead and wounded, and were advancing along it.

Towards 7 p.m. it was obvious that a retirement could not be postponed much longer, for the Germans were on three sides, whatever British troops had at one time been on the right flank apparently having gone, and shelling now opened from the left rear. As the first shell passed over and burst in front a man exclaimed, "Thank God, our guns have opened at last," but those that followed all burst along the trench. Captain Coulson had already reconnoitred as far as the farm buildings in an endeavour to find a line of retirement with an intermediate position between the trench and the ridge in the distance, but there appeared to be no alternative to crossing the intervening ground in one movement. It looked a long way, and as the light was still strong Captain Harvey hesitated. C.Q.M.S. Price had been ordered to warn the men to be ready, and now reported that all knew. No reply having come to his message to Battalion Headquarters, Captain Harvey at last gave the order, "Get out steadily and scatter for the ridge." Then followed that dread experience, a retirement of exhausted men across the open over unknown ground swept by rifle, machine-gun and artillery fire. Though wounded both in the thigh and arm, Captain Harvey endeavoured to control the movement. The men bunched somewhat crossing the stream, but once over it extended and made the best line they could. About half-way Privates F. E. Dann and J. Heslop, seeing Captain Harvey's difficulty in moving, came to his assistance thoughtless of themselves.

How many such acts passed unnoticed and how many gave their lives to help their friends over the long stretch to the ridge that promised safety!

When at last the ridge was reached no troops were found there, but in some fields beyond men were seen digging in. In the hope that these might be Durhams the survivors made for them, but found they were of some other regiment, the name of which is now forgotten.

Lieutenant C. W. Baldwin now took control of the few unwounded who had reached here, and carried on. Some few others actually succeeded in reaching B and C Companies at Boetleer's Farm, which lay farther to the north-west than the ridge to which A Company had retired.

To go back for a little. At the moment the retirement started Lieutenant G. E. Blackett, who with seven men and a Canadian officer, Lieutenant H. E. Lloyd Owen, occupied a position with a machine-gun in a ditch facing the Germans in the trench lately held by D Company, realized that if the withdrawal was to succeed it must be covered by

his party, and therefore his little group gallantly remained, hoping they would be able to hold on till dark which was not far off. However, after keeping the Germans, who had collected in large numbers behind the ruins of a house about thirty yards distant, at bay for ten minutes the machine-gun broke down and could not be got going again. The lock was therefore removed, broken and thrown into some water. The Germans then advanced and surrounded the party, which, with all ammunition exhausted, was captured, its small number seeming to surprise the Germans, who showed anger at the heavy losses inflicted on them. Of this act of self-sacrifice nothing was known until after the war. The heroism of these few officers and men in a situation which would have tried even seasoned soldiers, and this was their first action, will always hold a high place in the traditions of the Battalion.

Captain W. H. Coulson's description, written by him shortly afterwards, gives a very vivid picture of what must have been the experiences of so many during the withdrawal. He writes: "At last our turn came and we warned the men, then gave the order to retire. It was a terrible experience crossing that open ground as it was swept by shell, machine-gun and rifle-fire. There was a field of young corn with a cartway running through it. Harvey and I left the trench together, but soon got parted. Callinan and Baldwin I saw shortly after leaving the trench a short distance in front of me. I found myself near the cart road and had not got very far when my right arm dropped to my side useless. I looked down and saw my hand was quivering. I did not feel much pain at the time but just a numbness. I gathered my right arm up with my left hand and ran on for a considerable distance. Men were falling on all sides of me, and I saw one man helping another along. I came to a small field drain which I tried to jump over, but somehow I fell and could not get up again. I tried to undo my belts but could not get them loose, and just then a red-headed lad threw himself down beside me to help. He was risking too much staying there so I sent him off. I saw him later on in the train and he told me he had not got very far before he was hit himself. We all had the impression that the Germans were killing everyone and taking no prisoners, so I did not feel in a very happy position. I was lying in a very open spot and could see all round me. The Germans came on and passed the place where I was lying. Several times I saw the Germans in the corn bringing their rifles up and firing at something at very close range. I am afraid they were shooting the wounded. I suppose it would be about 7 p.m. when I was hit, and it was not long before it grew dark. Germans kept passing me, and one or two were very good and offered me a drink of cold coffee from their water-bottles. I could hear shouts

and groans all round me from the wounded. I myself began to feel very weak and discovered I had a wound in the back and was bleeding heavily. I could not get at this wound, but put some iodine on my shoulder and laid my field dressing on it. I had great difficulty in breathing and realized my lungs were hit. I became very stiff and cold and could hardly move. One German came up and said something, and then raised his rifle and aimed at me, but another stopped him. They of course took my revolver away and went through my pockets. At last two German Red Cross men came up and they cut the clothing away from my arm. They put me on to my feet and supported me, one on each side, and tried to get me to walk. It was very painful and I was very stiff. I only got a few yards when I dropped again, this time on the cart road. They stayed a short while, but then a lot of bullets came very close and they cleared off, leaving me there. I could hear someone calling me by name and groaning, so I tried to find out who it was but could not. I thought it was Harker, but apparently it was not. I was unable to do anything for him as I could not move. I think I was unconscious part of the night but do not know. A perfect hail of bullets was coming from somewhere and striking the earth all round. I never thought I should see daylight, and one moment hoped for a bullet to finish me off and the next hoped they would miss me. I was firmly convinced I should be shot if taken prisoner.

"Daylight came at last, but there was a thick fog. I could still hear the man I had heard before, and later saw him through the mist on his hands and knees apparently trying to crawl towards me. Just then some more bullets came and he seemed to lie down, and I did not see him again. The fog gradually lifted and the sun came out. Some Red Cross men at last found me and they, supporting me, led me back over the ground we had retired across the night before. I hardly dared to look around, dreading who I might see lying there. I am almost sure I saw Sergeant Price, but the man I had taken to be Harker I could not see anywhere."

Soon after A and D Companies had left Boetleer's Farm the position around (7), (8) and (9) was subjected to shelling, the farm buildings with high explosive and the whole position generally with shrapnel. About the same time C Company, which was digging in along the north side of field (7), came under a sharp burst of rifle-fire, but only suffered one casualty, Sergeant T. Taylor being shot through the head and killed. It was surprising that more were not hit, for owing to the sodden nature of the ground and only having the small entrenching tool available, they had not succeeded in getting very deeply dug in. Great trouble was experienced in keeping the rifles ready for action, and it was actually necessary to immerse some in

a small stream running alongside in order to clear them of the mud with which they were clogged.

The shelling continued on and off until 11 a.m., when a heavy bombardment of the whole position began, shells being counted bursting at varying rates of from forty-five to sixty-eight per minute, and casualties were heavy in and around field (7). An infantry attack against trenches (4) and (5) also developed but was beaten off. Telephone communication which had early broken down with A and D Companies now also failed with the Headquarters of the Canadian Infantry Brigade. All attempts to restore the lines failed, Lieutenant E. A. Leybourne, the Battalion signalling officer, being wounded and much of the equipment destroyed by a shell whilst endeavouring to run a line forward to trenches (1) and (2).

Shortly after 2 p.m. a Canadian soldier reported to Battalion Headquarters that the "Durhams" had left their trenches, a statement disbelieved at the time and subsequently found to be absolutely untrue, not a single man having retired, but on hearing this a Canadian officer went back to his Brigade Headquarters. It is not known what he reported, but the following written message was subsequently received about 4 p.m. apparently in consequence of his report.

"To O.C. 8th and 7th B.M. No. 8, April 25th. Strong reinforcements are coming. Hang on. Please report situation. From O.C. 2nd Bde. 3.25 p.m."

Between 3 and 3.30 p.m. B Company, under Major J. R. Ritson, was brought up from reserve and placed under cover to the east of the buildings at (9), Lieutenant E. H. Motum with two machine-guns was ordered to take up a position facing north, east of the same buildings, on the side of the road running through Boetleer's Farm from St. Julien to Grafenstafel, and Captain E. H. Veitch was sent with a detachment of C Company to hold the high ground by a wind-mill about one thousand yards distant on the right flank, for no information could be obtained as to what troops there were in that direction or how they were disposed, and there was great danger of the Germans coming round from that point. No sooner had the machine-guns got into position than there came a great opportunity for their use. A little earlier three trains had been observed disgorging German Infantry on the Ypres-Staden Railway, and now these were seen nearer still in close order but beginning to extend, and move south. Soon they came into range, and the chance was not lost by the eager gunners who wrought havoc amongst them. About this time a number of men were seen retiring towards the east, and as it was thought they might

be men of A or D Companies Captain J. A. S. Ritson was sent to collect them, but they were found to be about thirty Canadians who had been ordered to retire.

Some time afterwards, as the situation with regard to A and D Companies was unknown, two platoons of B Company, under Captain J. Turnbull and Lieutenant P. Kirkup, were ordered forward to reinforce them. After an advance of about five hundred yards these platoons reached a breastwork (marked (11) on the sketch plan), where they came under enfilade fire from the left and any further forward movement became impossible. From this breastwork a line of trench something over a hundred yards ahead was visible, and out of this after a while about twenty men emerged, moving towards the east, where they disappeared. Owing to continued loss from the enfilade fire the two platoons were eventually compelled to evacuate the breastwork and fall back on their Company, which, together with C Company, which had been brought up from support, held the line of the road from Boetleer's Farm towards Grafenstafel. Here many were gassed by the shells bursting along its length. Owing to hedges and brushwood the situation on the left was not visible from this road, up and down which a German aeroplane now flew very low, though heavily fired on, directing artillery fire on both B Company and the machine-guns.

Whilst the two platoons of B Company were endeavouring to reach A and D Companies, Major J. R. Ritson was sent forward to reconnoitre, and, though his orderly, Private Patterson, was shot down, he succeeded in reaching approximately the point marked (12) on the sketch plan, i.e., the line of the Stroembeek, south of Kron Prinz Farm, which was burning, from where he could see a line of trench but did not observe any movement. Owing to heavy rifle-fire he was unable to proceed farther forward, and after a short time made his way back to Headquarters.

The Germans had by now advanced considerably, having extended both east and west from their original position, and threatened to envelop the Battalion. This situation was reported to the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, the report also stating, on the information of a Canadian officer, that all in trench (2) were either killed or wounded, it not being known till later that this was incorrect, but that the enemy at the time were not pressing the attack with their infantry.

A great difficulty experienced during the day was that it was not known under whose command this section of the defence came or to whom reports were to be sent. It was not under the 85th Infantry Brigade, and the Canadian staff were apparently only responsible for their own people, and therefore between 4 and 5 p.m. Captain J. A. S.

Ritson was sent back to try to ascertain under whose orders the Battalion actually was and to explain to them the situation; that there was a wide gap between the Battalion and the troops on the right, that the Germans were in greatly superior numbers, and also that the Battalion was suffering from very heavy artillery fire in front and flank and was in need of artillery support. On his return he brought the information that an Infantry Brigade was standing by and would move up to reinforce the position after dark, also that a Major of the Canadian contingent had told him that he, the Major, had orders from the Canadian Brigade to tell us to retire to a position he indicated on the map along the line of the Hannebeek.

About 5.40 p.m. a verbal message was received from the officer commanding the detachment of Suffolks in trench (3) asking if the Battalion was retiring. To this the answer was sent that it was not and that he had to hold on. Ammunition was sent him and arrangements made to send further supplies if required.

Amongst those wounded during the afternoon and evening was Major J. R. Ritson, who, after his return from reconnoitring the position of A and D Companies, was severely wounded by a shell. He was carried a few yards to the rear and his wound dressed, but he refused to be taken out of the fight as he realized the situation was so serious that no men could be spared to carry him and no stretcher-bearers were available. This self-sacrifice resulted in his being taken prisoner early on the morning of the 26th and suffering much at the hands of the Germans until sent into Holland. Of the happenings in general the individual knew nothing save of those immediately around him, but that Major Ritson was wounded spread quickly over the Boetleer's Farm position, and one still recalls the sense of personal loss felt as word was passed along, so much of the existence of the Battalion had always seemed to centre round him. Lieutenant F. M. Weeks was wounded at the same time.

Just after dusk a Company from a Middlesex Regiment Battalion and also one from a Battalion of the Monmouth Regiment (both Territorial) arrived at Battalion Headquarters. Both these Companies had been relieved on the night of April 24/25, but owing to the reliefs being late they were unable to join their Battalions on account of daylight and so had remained under cover to the rear during the 25th. Hearing the engagement in front of them, they moved up in the evening, practically "to the sound of the guns." Their arrival at this moment was very welcome, and the Middlesex Company was immediately pushed into the firing line to prolong the right flank, whilst the Monmouth Company was held as a reserve in the rear of that flank.

As darkness fell rifle-fire ceased with the exception of occasional

bursts on either side. A few men of A and D Companies found their way to the position and were collected in reserve. The Germans used Véry lights constantly, but the Battalion was without these, none having been issued to it.

At 8 p.m., there being no sign of the promised reinforcements, Captain J. A. S. Ritson was again sent back to report the situation and try to ascertain under whose orders the Battalion came. He succeeded in reaching the Headquarters of the 3rd Royal Fusiliers, from where, after some delay, he got in touch by telephone with the 85th Infantry Brigade and was told that a Territorial Infantry Brigade was due to relieve the Boetleer's Farm position at 9 p.m. and also that it was intended to fall back to a new line. This was actually the order of the Commander of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, but Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, being in doubt as to whose orders he came under, remained in action at Boetleer's Farm, and thus the Battalion and the other detachments were now out in front of this new line in an isolated position.

Time passed and there was no sign of reinforcement or relief. The defence of the position was reorganized and all dug in more deeply, the small entrenching tool still only being available. Extra ammunition and water were distributed. Patrols were sent out and the Monmouth Company brought up to near field (7), from where two of its platoons were sent forward to the buildings at (9) to close a gap which existed there between trench (3) and the point (8) on the plan.

Throughout the night of April 25/26 the whole position was constantly shelled with shrapnel, and a number of men were hit by snipers. Though dealt with by patrols, they showed remarkable boldness, two actually succeeding in getting into the buildings at (9) and it was some time before they were located.

At midnight there was a violent action apparently about a mile away to the east, but though a patrol was sent out it could gain no information as to what it was or the result. Touch was, however, gained with the 5th Canadian Battalion on the right.

A little before dawn the Middlesex and Monmouth Companies received orders to rejoin their Battalions. As reinforcements were still expected, the Middlesex Company was ordered to remain in position till these arrived, when it could withdraw. The two platoons of the Monmouth Company filling the gap between trench (3) and point (8) were ordered to remain there, but the other two platoons of this Company having suffered very heavily during the night, losing both platoon commanders, all non-commissioned officers and a number of men from the shrapnel fire were allowed to withdraw.

At daylight on the 26th a mist obscured the ground. Patrols which now returned reported the Germans to be between two hundred

and fifty and three hundred yards distant to the north and overlapping the right flank of the Battalion.

As nothing had been heard from the two Monmouth platoons near point (9) for some time Lieutenant A. W. Nesbitt was sent to discover, if possible, the reason. Passing the building nearest (8) on the sketch plan, he found several wounded Canadians and men of the Battalion lying behind it. These stated that they had recently heard shouting from the other building about fifteen yards distant across the road asking for an officer to go over. They had called back, "Who are you?" and received the answer "Monmouths." None of them had, however, ventured to leave the shelter of the building as the road here was swept by rifle-fire. On hearing this Lieutenant Nesbitt himself shouted, but received no reply. Taking a Canadian rifle, he left the building and advanced to a gap in the hedge where at one time a gate had opened on to the road. Just as he reached this a bullet splintered one of the gate-posts, so he took cover behind the hedge. At this point he was within a few yards of the other buildings and again shouted, asking if they were Monmouths, and received the reply, "Yes, come across." He thereupon left the hedge, crossed the road, turned the corner of the building and was met by six Germans and made a prisoner. Private J. W. Bowman of C Company, who had followed a short distance behind, succeeded in making his escape and reporting what had occurred. It was afterwards ascertained that the Germans, having advanced during the night, had rushed the building shortly before dawn.

It was now about 4 a.m. and the Germans were reported to be advancing. The position was very serious, for the Middlesex Company was at that moment found to have withdrawn but was followed and brought up into action again on C Company's right which had suffered very severely during the night, losing all non-commissioned officers here. Private A. Dixon, who had carried several messages during the night, however, took control.

As the light grew stronger Lieutenant Motum observed two Germans on the roof of one of the farm buildings close to his left gun. These were promptly shot and it was then found that the buildings were full of Germans. There was no time to deal with these, for the guns were firing at a continuous stream of Germans running into the buildings and into an orchard less than a hundred yards away and which was full of them; many were carrying timber which looked like railway sleepers. The fire from the buildings gradually killed or wounded all the machine gunners save Lieutenant Motum and Sergeant S. Platten who, however, continued firing and "getting a nice bag" till all the belts were used up.

As the German Infantry appeared through the mist they came

C

on in a thick line, firing from the hip and calling that they were "British and Suffolks," and on the right, "Don't shoot, we are your own men." In consequence of this the firing slackened momentarily but then opened in full again. In the centre and towards the right they were stopped when about fifty yards distant, but on the extreme right they turned the flank of the Middlesex. On the left they captured all the buildings at (8) and (9), and bringing up a machine-gun, enfiladed the line of the road from there. Trenches (3), (4) and (5) on the left were then reported to have been evacuated, and with the Germans working round both flanks there was no alternative to a retirement. At first there was some confusion, but this was soon checked, the men obeying orders with wonderful steadiness, and at a shallow trench about three hundred yards in rear of the road the line was halted. There Lieutenant J. R. Brass was wounded. In spite of the heavy fire reorganization was carried out. This trench soon became untenable, being commanded by high ground on both flanks, and a further retirement was ordered by alternate sections to a new position about the line of the Hannebeek, which was held with wide intervals to cover a more extended front. From here a steady fire was maintained under the cheery advice of Captain Stevens who exhorted the men to "aim at the middle button, boys," and the advance of the Germans was stayed. Though the position was then shelled, there were but few casualties. A small number of men of C Company became separated on the right near to the Hannebeek and were pressed back to near the Zonnebeke-St. Julien road, where they encountered a patrol from the 12th Battalion County of London which was holding the new front line astride that road. Captain Veitch, after reporting to the Headquarters of that Battalion, ordered the party to fill a gap existing on the right, and Lieutenant P. Kirkup then went forward to lead the remainder of the Battalion into this position; the movement was carried out in good order without pursuit, and some shallow lengths of trench, only knee-deep, on the right of the 12th County of London were occupied. There appeared to be a gap to the right again of these, but this was eventually filled by a Battalion of the Rifle Brigade which, when it first appeared, was taken to be Germans and fired on by the Londons until a message was semaphored: "Cease fire, Rifle Brigade."

Although a heavy bombardment lasted on and off throughout the 26th, the farms and cottages immediately behind receiving the attention of "woolly bears," and there was considerable sniping, there were but few casualties, though all were too exhausted to attempt to deepen the trenches.

Now that the actual pressure of the German attack was eased hunger and thirst began to make themselves felt, and though a small



CAPT. G. A. STEVENS, D.S.O.

Adjutant, 1912 to 1916.

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The pressure of the German attack was eased, and the Battalion was able to make themselves felt, and though a small



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supply of water was obtained, in spite of snipers, from some deserted houses behind, there was no prospect of any food. Some tried to snatch a few moments' sleep, lying on the bundles of tree branches which lined the bottom of the trenches, but there was no great success in their attempts.

A message was about to be sent back to the Brigade Headquarters when at 1 a.m. on the 27th information was received that a portion of the line was to be relieved before dawn by the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.). Shortly afterwards it arrived, and as the Battalion was fortunate enough to be holding the portion in question, it was soon out of the trenches and directed to withdraw to Velorenhoek. The ordered reliefs of later days down communication trenches contrast strangely with this first in the dark hours of the morning of April 27th when the Battalion stepped out of mere ditches and formed up roughly on a field track behind, officers and non-commissioned officers calling out for any more "8th Durhams" lest any were left.

Following a track across country, the main Zonnebeke-Ypres road was reached at a point between the railway crossing and Frezenberg, the entrance to the village being marked by the wreckage of a field-gun with its horses caught by a German shell.

Some two or three hundred yards beyond Frezenberg Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull halted the remnant of his Battalion under cover of the wayside trees, for there were still trees there in those days and green fields, with here and there a picturesque old Flemish farm. There does not appear to have been any record kept of those who answered to their names when the roll was called, but only six officers, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull, Captain G. A. Stevens (adjutant), Captain E. H. Veitch, Lieutenants P. Kirkup, W. Johnson and C. L. B. Whall, together with Company Sergeant-Major W. Roxby, Sergeant J. Forrest and one hundred and forty-two other non-commissioned officers and men, mostly from B and C Companies, were found to be present. Later on news was received of a further party, including Captain T. A. Bradford and Captain J. A. S. Ritson, which had reached Vlamertinghe. Whatever emotions may be aroused by a picture or the reading of such an incident as a roll call after battle, most of those present were much too exhausted to have any feeling or to realize to any extent the loss of so many comrades; that was to come later, and for the moment overcome by an intense desire for sleep and food, the last consumed having been on the afternoon of the 24th, perhaps little attention was paid to the words of Captain Stevens, who, after a company had been organized and the remaining ammunition shared equally, said amongst other things now forgotten: "You have taken part in a battle which will be remembered as long as the war is spoken of."

Then the march to Velorenhoek was resumed and there, at 3 a.m., a position was taken up in front of the village with two platoons on either side of the road. There were a few dug-outs and old gun-pits which served as dug-outs, and these were occupied. Close by the roadside was discovered a pond. The water was of such doubtful cleanliness that there was some hesitation in its use; eventually, however, off came puttees and boots and in went the tired feet, but washing was confined to these.

The total casualties suffered during the action amounted to 19 officers and 574 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men, killed, wounded or missing.

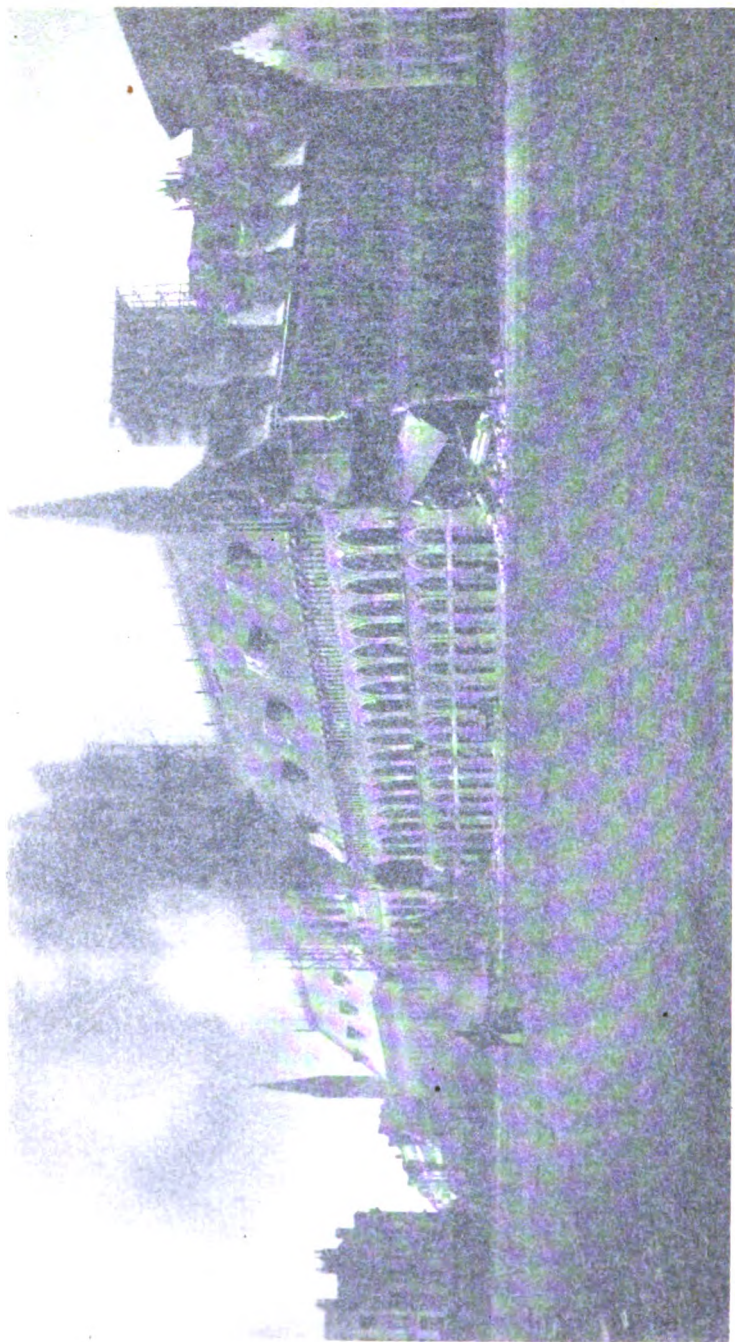
That the great sacrifice was not in vain became clear later on when Lieutenant-General Bulfin, commanding the 28th Division, placed the following on record :

"The greatest possible credit is due to the 8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry and the small Detachment, who, in spite of having their flanks turned and being enfiladed, remained in the Northern Line beating off all attacks and inflicting heavy loss on the enemy and thereby saved the flank of the 85th Infantry Brigade."

During the course of the war the Battalion took part in many battles and saw many places, but Ypres and the Grafenstafel Ridge in April, 1915, will ever hold the chief place in the memories of those who survived.

The most immediate needs after arrival at Velorenhoek were sleep and food. The latter could not be expected before night, but Private J. W. Bowman of C Company, possessed with the instincts of an old campaigner, appeared shortly after the dug-outs had been taken over bearing bowls of soup and milk. Some gunners had given him the soup and he had caught and milked a cow. Water was difficult to obtain, for though a few civilians were actually still in the village they had removed the handles of their pumps and refused to replace them. A party set off with all the water-bottles to Potijze, where it was rumoured there was a well, but had to return empty-handed owing to heavy shelling. A battery close by, however, provided tea from their own scanty supply.

Although the plateau on which Velorenhoek was situated was shelled off and on every day, not a single casualty resulted from this cause during the whole of the period spent here. This appeared to be largely on account of the characteristically methodical shelling of the German system, the plateau being apparently divided into areas, each receiving its shelling in regular rotation, consequently everyone knew when the shelling was due and got under cover while it lasted. It was the exception for a dug-out to be hit.



YPRES
The Halles and Grande Place.

The first line transport, however, were not so fortunate. Their lines, which were only a half-mile west of the Battalion's dug-outs, were very heavily shelled each day, even to the extent of "Jack Johnsons." Possibly much of this attention was due to the fact that the lines were immediately in front of a Canadian battery. In addition to several casualties amongst the personnel, no less than forty-three horses were killed in seven days. The transport also had a very trying time bringing up supplies for the Battalion each night from the quartermaster's stores in Vlamertinghe. Ypres, through which they had to pass, was continually shelled, as were all the cross-roads, and they had to run the gauntlet of this.

On the 26th the quartermaster's stores were struck by a shell which wounded Lieutenant and Quartermaster W. Francis, Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant H. Wilkinson, Armourer Sergeant Eves (died of wounds), Pioneer Sergeant Mole, Private Smiles and one or two others. Private Hogg, a Bede College student who had only joined the Quartermaster's Staff that day, was killed, and also a Canadian who had come in to borrow something. Private Proudlock of A Company, who was unhurt, then carried on the duties for a considerable time.

The Battalion remained at Velorenhoek until May 3rd, being employed each night in digging trenches and constructing dug-outs. On the night of April 30th the party drawing tools was heavily shelled, but the men were wonderfully steady and there were no casualties. On this day Captain J. Turnbull with eighty-three men rejoined from Vlamertinghe.

Protection against future gas attacks was now issued. This consisted of cotton waste soaked in a solution of hypophosphate contained in a gauze wrapping, and when in use covered the mouth and nostrils but gave no protection for the eyes.

On May 2nd orders were received to move back west from Velorenhoek, and arrangements were made for a start at 8.30 p.m., but at 5 p.m. the Germans began a determined attack to the north and north-east on the line of the Hannebeek, making use again of asphyxiating gases. Dense clouds of the greenish-yellow vapour were visible from Velorenhoek, and the plateau itself was very heavily shelled from 5 to 8 p.m. In consequence the move was postponed. Both attacks were repulsed. With the exception of four men buried in a dug-out, but who were extricated only more or less shaken, no casualties were suffered. Of the digging out of these four men the story is told that the third man uncovered was asked if they had all been got out now; as soon as he could speak he replied: "What number am I?" and was told number three. "Then," said he, "there's another." The Battalion eventually, at 10.30 p.m., marched

via Potijze and Ypres to a rest camp south of Brielen, arriving there at 2.30 a.m. Both Ypres and the roads were shelled. The 9th Battalion was unfortunate, losing nine killed and three wounded from one shell whilst passing through Ypres.

May 3rd was spent quietly in camp. In the afternoon all were placed in shelter in dug-outs, for the camp had the reputation of being shelled each afternoon; however, such was not the case this day. In the evening Captain Bradford rejoined with 120 men from Vlamertinghe, and at 8.30 p.m. the Battalion proceeded with the Brigade and marched through Vlamertinghe and Poperinghe—both these towns had been frequently shelled since the Battalion passed through on April 23rd and were in consequence practically deserted—to billets in and about a farm between St. Jan-ter-Biezen and Watou, arriving there at 2 a.m. on May 4th.

The weather now became warm and sunny, and the peaceful agricultural countryside was a welcome contrast to the shell-torn area around Ypres. The few days' rest here were very delightful.

During the morning of May 4th the Battalion, together with the 7th Battalion, paraded in a field near to Watou and was addressed by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, who remarked how a critical situation had arisen at Ypres due to the dastardly use by the Germans of poisonous gases; that the Northumbrian Division had been called upon earlier than had been intended, and referred to the magnificent stand that had been made and the gallant behaviour under fire. He remarked on the heavy losses sustained by the 8th Battalion and paid a tribute to those who had fallen in the battle.

The strength of the Battalion was now 14 officers and 411 other ranks, but on May 8th a draft of no less than 19 officers arrived from England, these including Captain A. N. Clark, Captain A. Oswell, Lieutenants N. Clark, A. M. Gelsthorpe, H. B. Holdsworth, T. A. Saint, J. W. Turnbull and Second-Lieutenants W. Boyd, F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson, K. M. Guthrie, W. D. Walker and E. Fisher, all from the second line Battalion. About the same time Lieutenant Stewart, Royal Army Medical Corps, who had recently joined the Battalion in the place of Lieutenant Stenhouse, taken prisoner, was relieved by Lieutenant Wilson, Royal Army Medical Corps, as Medical Officer.

On the afternoon of May 9th the rest came to an end and the Battalion proceeded with the Brigade to the woods just north of Brandhoek, about midway between Poperinghe and Vlamertinghe, where it bivouacked until the 11th, supplying working parties on the night of the 10th for the construction of the defences of Ypres. The bivouac shelters were only made from the branches of trees, the weather unsettled and no fires possible during daylight.

At 7.30 p.m. on the 11th the Brigade moved out of the woods towards Vlamertinghe, on nearing which the Battalion was ordered to dug-outs south of A Camp, Brielen, occupied by the 1st Cavalry Division, whilst the remainder of the Brigade continued through Ypres.

Just after midday on the 13th orders were received to move at once towards Ypres where a heavy engagement was in progress. The Battalion, which now came under the orders of General De Lisle, was ordered to G.H.Q. lines just east of Potijze. The chateau here was reached about 2 p.m. without casualties, although the road to the east of Ypres was shelled. The Companies were placed in dug-outs west of the chateau whilst the Commanding Officer and Adjutant reported to General Briggs, commanding the cavalry. This the Battalion was then ordered to reinforce. One Company under Captain Bradford was placed south of the Ypres-Velorenhoeck road and the other under Captain Ritson north of that road. Shelling was now very heavy. The Companies moved in successive lines of sections with the men extended five to eight paces, and the trenches were occupied with the loss of two wounded only. Whilst filing along the trench into position a cavalry officer inquired, "Who are you fellows?" and being told "Durhams," exclaimed, "Thank God, now we'll get some digging done."

The situation on arrival in the G.H.Q. lines was: the cavalry, consisting of Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards, 10th Hussars and 5th Dragoon Guards, together with other cavalry regiments, had been holding trenches about Velorenhoeck. Since 4 a.m. the Germans had shelled these trenches very heavily indeed. Between 12 noon and 1 p.m. after sustaining heavy losses the cavalry were literally blown out of their trenches, which were then occupied by the Germans. Having retired some distance, they started to dig themselves in. About 2 p.m. a counter-attack was delivered and the German Infantry was driven back, but the front line trenches were untenable and apparently most of the cavalry retired again, and part now held a position in the rear of which the remainder were being reorganized.

After dusk one Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry Brigade went forward to assist in digging a new line covered by the cavalry, whilst the 8th Battalion was collected by the road near the chateau in readiness to repel an expected dash by the German cavalry which, however, did not materialize, and by 2 a.m. on the 14th the situation cleared up, the front line trenches being completely reorganized and the Battalion again returned to them.

The G.H.Q. line now ran from the farm at the north-eastern corner of Potijze Wood down to the Potijze-Velorenhoeck road

near the stream, thence across to the Potijze-Zillebeke road, later known as Cavalry Road, which it followed as far as the station on the Ypres-Roulers Railway near to Hell Fire Corner. The nature of the trenches varied very considerably. Some, mostly in the centre, had been constructed by the French and were a veritable labyrinth of communication trenches and dug-outs in which it was very difficult to control men. They quickly became water-logged. Most of the cover trenches and dug-outs were immediately behind the fire trench, a great mistake.

The 14th May passed with a good deal of artillery fire, but this was not so intense as on the previous day. Private J. Moore was killed, but this was the only casualty. The work of reorganization was continued: the Royal Horse Guards and Essex Yeomanry were in the centre between the two Companies of the Battalion, whilst the 10th Hussars were on the right till after dusk, when the 3rd Cavalry Division took over the line and Captain Ritson's Company was brought south of the Ypres-Velorenhoek road, the 16th Lancers occupying the position north and the 4th Hussars south of that road on the immediate left of the Battalion. During the day a congratulatory telegram was received from General De Lisle.

May 15th was an uneventful day, though there was a fair amount of shelling, and at 2.30 a.m. on the 16th the Battalion was ordered back to C Camp, Brielen. Owing to the men being very exhausted progress was slow and the Camp was not reached until 4 a.m. The casualties during the three days spent in the G.H.Q. lines amounted to one killed (Private J. Moore) and eight other ranks wounded.

The whole of the 16th was spent resting in C Camp, and although the ground towards the east was heavily shelled throughout the day and many splinters came into the camp, there were no casualties.

The 17th was a quiet day. At 8 p.m. the Battalion came under the orders of General Bingham, commanding the 4th Cavalry Brigade, and moved once more to Potijze, reporting there at 9.30 p.m. and being ordered into dug-outs in the grounds on the north side of the chateau. Unfortunately in the darkness very few of these could be found and most of the Battalion spent a very wet, miserable night in the open.

Early on the morning of the 18th a move was made to a new line of trench which had been begun in the G.H.Q. lines. This ran from the farm at the north-eastern corner of Potijze Wood in a north-west direction to the St. Jean-Wieltje road and was mostly water-logged. Work was to have been begun on this at 2.30 a.m., but through a misunderstanding—how often this happened in these cases—the Royal Engineer Officer who was to direct did not arrive

till 9.30 a.m., when the work was actually ordered to be started in daylight in full view of the German observation posts. The natural result was heavy shelling at once and the men had to seek cover. It was remarkable that despite this there were no casualties. One shell burst amongst a group of thirty men without inflicting any injury.

The shelling ceased as soon as the men were withdrawn, but after a short interval a further attempt was made to improve the trench. As soon as ever movement began the shelling started again very heavily, and this time the parties working were not so fortunate, Sergeant Lowery of B Company and Private H. Best of C Company being killed whilst seven men were wounded. All work was then suspended and the Battalion ordered to withdraw quietly to the dug-outs. This was carried out without further loss. After dark the whole Battalion turned out and carried on the work.

Three uneventful days followed with the usual daily shelling, only one man, however, being wounded, and after dusk on May 21st, the trenches were relieved by the 28th Division, and the Battalion moved back for a rest into B Huts, west of Ypres, during the early hours of the 22nd. Whilst here notification was received of the award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal to Private J. Morrison for his gallantry on the afternoon of April 25th. Only the day was spent in B Huts, for in the evening the Battalion was ordered back to Potijze.

At Potijze it came under the orders of Brigadier-General Pereira, commanding the 85th Infantry Brigade. One Company under Captain Ritson went into dug-outs north of the chateau, whilst the other under Captain Bradford occupied the G.H.Q. line-trench at the north-east corner of the wood. Captain Ritson seemed to have a premonition that something was going to happen, and was very much on the alert all through the night. At 2.40 a.m., just before dawn, on May 24th, very heavy rifle-fire broke out along the whole front, and five minutes later the enemy's gas approached the chateau grounds. This was followed by a heavy bombardment, a large proportion of the shells containing poisonous gases. Cyanide of potassium was afterwards traced both by the smell and by deposits in the shell craters, but it was uncertain whether this was in the general gas cloud, or only in the shells, or in both. The appearance of the gas was that of a thick mist which varied in intensity. Whilst it lasted one could seldom see more than a hundred yards through it. It caused a choking sensation and intense irritation of the eyes, which streamed with water. So far as the Chateau Wood was concerned, the effect was more moral than otherwise, the respirators, of cotton waste soaked in phosphate, even a sock damped with urine, seeming quite effective. The duration of the

gas cloud at its densest part was from twenty to thirty minutes, but the fumes from the shells and some of the gas hung about the wood and hollows in the ground for some hours. In the chateau dressing-station it was found necessary to wear respirators for four hours after the attack. Regimental Sergeant-Major J. Atkinson and Company Quartermaster-Sergeant Briggs were gassed amongst others.

About 6.30 a.m. the intensity of the bombardment sensibly slackened, but it continued more or less violently all day. Lieutenant F. C. H. Carpenter was wounded during the shelling. As a result of the attack the Germans gained some ground at Shell Trap Farm and in the wood east of Wittepoort Farm, but at all other points they were repulsed.

At 11.45 a.m. the 6th Battalion went forward to carry out a counter-attack, and Captain Ritson's Company was moved from the dug-outs into the G.H.Q. line. About thirty minutes later the Battalion was ordered to move up at once to the railway crossing on the road connecting the Ypres-Velorenhoek and Ypres-Hooge roads near to Railway Wood. By 12.30 p.m. the Companies were assembled under cover of the chateau and the advance began, Captain Bradford's Company leading under two guides from the 3rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers. These two guides were the same men who had led the Battalion on April 24th.

At first the advance was made in a southern direction from the chateau under cover of a hedge, but afterwards under the observation of a German balloon, and heavy shelling began. It was then, therefore, continued along the G.H.Q. line as far as the station on the Ypres-Roulers Railway. Progress was very slow as the trench was crowded, and many men, including Lance-Corporal Thompson and Privates E. Hill and W. Robson, Bussy, were killed and wounded before the station was reached. Lieutenant Holdsworth was wounded in the chin. Lieutenant W. Johnson had a narrow escape when a shell got a direct hit on his platoon. He felt a terrific blow on his right thigh, and on feeling with his hand it became covered with something warm and sticky which he concluded was blood. To his surprise and relief he found that it was only condensed milk, a tin of which he was carrying in his pack, and through which a shrapnel bullet had passed. From the station which, together with the ground to the east, was being heavily shelled, the best line for the further advance of about fifteen hundred yards was directly up the railway itself. There was an obstruction in the form of a thick barbed wire entanglement, but Captain Bradford volunteered to go forward and cut a way through. This he did, and the men were then moved through in small parties of four to six at the double through the gap thus made into cover under the railway embankment. It was now 1.20 p.m. For the next five

hundred yards the way lay along the north side of the embankment, then the railway had to be crossed and the south side followed. Here the Battalion came under rifle-fire, and more casualties, including Captain J. Turnbull, were suffered, by the time the level crossing was reached. Private Murray had his cap badge shot off and embedded in his head. A party of "The Buffs" who were following in the rear suffered very severely.

At the level crossing Major Baker, commanding the 3rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, explained the situation. To the north of the railway the Germans were six or seven hundred yards away whilst the trench of the Royal Fusiliers was about three hundred yards up the railway, extending from near it to some ruined houses two hundred yards north. There were only between twenty and thirty of the Fusiliers left in this trench, and they were badly in need of support. Two attempts had been made by "The Buffs" to reinforce them, but each had failed with heavy losses. The continuation of the trench from the ruined houses northwards was held by a Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment, but very lightly indeed. The Germans had gained a footing in Railway Wood, and were digging in; they were thus partly behind the right flank of the Royal Fusiliers in the trench on the north of the railway into the rear of which they could fire, but the Fusiliers held the western edge of the wood and continued the line to the south.

Major Baker asked Colonel Turnbull if he would make an attempt to reinforce the trench between the railway and the ruined houses. Captain Ritson and Lieutenant Johnson were at once ordered to carry this out.

From the level crossing the road running north towards Velorenhoek was slightly sunken, and along this the men, having removed their packs, were extended. About fifty yards east of the road were two lengths of unoccupied trench, then for two hundred yards an open field without a vestige of cover had to be crossed. This was strewn with the bodies of those who had fallen in the previous efforts to reach the front line.

The orders issued to Captain Ritson were first to make for the unoccupied trenches fifty yards in front, and there to wait till a favourable opportunity offered to get on.

Upon the signal being given Captain Ritson and Lieutenant Johnson at once led their men towards these trenches; no fire was opened on them, so the Adjutant signalled to them to continue the advance over the remaining two hundred yards. The men obeyed the order splendidly, got out of the trenches together and went forward at a rapid pace in full view of the Germans in a trench captured by them, and which they were engaged in reversing the

parapet. This was actually a support trench of the British front line between it and the level crossing, but to the right. These were apparently quite taken by surprise, for about half the distance was covered before fire was opened. This, when it did come, was heavy, both artillery and rifle, but at first bore too far to the right, and by the time the line of advance was found the front line had been reached without loss. It was a very fine feat well carried out. The spirit of the men going forward was splendid, and it was entirely due to their eagerness that the attempt was successful. Later on reinforcements were sent up by means of a drain, and a partly dug communication trench leading towards the ruined houses and a gap between the Royal Fusiliers and the East Surreys was thus closed.

At 10 p.m. orders were received from the 85th Infantry Brigade by the 3rd Royal Fusiliers to arrange to withdraw the 8th Battalion which was to return to the G.H.Q. line where the 151st Infantry Brigade was to reorganize. In consequence of this those of the Battalion who had remained in support at the level crossing were withdrawn after collecting and removing the wounded from along the railway, but as the 3rd Royal Fusiliers had suffered such heavy losses during the day that it would have been difficult for them to hold the trench north of the railway, Captain Ritson's party was not withdrawn until arrangements had been made with the 3rd Battalion Middlesex Regiment to close the gap which otherwise would have been left. At 2 a.m. on the 25th the trench was relieved by the 3rd Middlesex, and after all the killed and wounded had been brought in this party, together with Battalion Headquarters, left for Potijze.

Shortly after moving off from the level crossing a counter-attack against the Germans by the 80th and 85th Infantry Brigades commenced, and coming under rifle-fire cover had to be taken, but eventually at 3.30 a.m. the G.H.Q. lines were reached. Here the Battalion, now so reduced in strength by its continued losses, was organized into a single Company.

The Battalion remained in the G.H.Q. lines until the 27th, being heavily shelled each day, Private R. E. Brooks being killed, when it was withdrawn, moving off from Potijze chateau at 1.30 a.m. for B huts west of Ypres. The actual trench strength at this date amounted to 150 non-commissioned officers and men only.

It will be observed that the Brigade is now referred to as the 151st Infantry Brigade. Up till this time it, together with the other two Brigades in the Division, had borne the names by which they were known in England, but now the Division and its three Brigades fell into line with the remainder of the British Expeditionary Force and bore numbers in sequence, the Division becoming the 50th, whilst the

Brigades were numbered 149 (Northumberland), 150 (Durham and York), 151 (Durham).

On May 28th the Battalion moved to C huts, about four hundred yards farther up the road in the direction of Brielen, and these were occupied until June 1st, when after a march to Poperinghe billets just to the south of the town were occupied. On the 3rd, however, this area having been allotted to another Division, a move was made to Bassebourn, a short distance away, where bivouacs were constructed around a farm which accommodated Battalion Headquarters.

As the weather now became settled, a very enjoyable rest of nine days was spent here, during which the 2nd Battalion having moved up with the 6th Division from Armentières, passed through Poperinghe, and Captain A. H. M. Bowers, at one time, in the years before the war, Adjutant to the Battalion, was able to spend a few hours at Headquarters.

Poperinghe, which was within easy walking distance, was visited on every possible occasion, a great attraction being the 6th Division "Follies." The estaminets and souvenir shops which abounded in the town soon absorbed the few francs of pay issued during this period. A somewhat drab little town, the touch of civilization it afforded was very welcome after nearly a month of "The Salient." It boasted a fairly extensive Grande Place, entered from the west by the main road from Cassel which continued on the east of the place as the Rue d'Ypres or Yper, to give it the Flemish spelling. Save Ypres, Poperinghe became perhaps the best known town in Flanders to the British Expeditionary Force.

CHAPTER IV

AMALGAMATION OF THE 6TH AND 8TH BATTALIONS. SANCTUARY WOOD, HOOGE AND KEMMEL

ON June 7th orders were received for the amalgamation of the 6th and 8th Battalions into a Composite Battalion to be known as the 6/8 Composite Battalion, this step being due to the losses suffered by each Battalion in action and the fact that a sufficient number of drafts were not forthcoming from home to bring either up to a fighting strength. At this date the strength of the 8th Battalion all told amounted to only 27 officers, 312 other ranks. Accordingly on June 8th the amalgamation was carried out, with Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull in Command, Major J. H. Smeddle, Second-in-Command, Captain Stevens, Adjutant, and Lieutenant Hope (6th Battalion) as Quartermaster. The Battalion was organized into four Companies, A Company being composed of 8th Battalion personnel entirely under Captain Bradford, the remaining Companies consisting of 6th Battalion officers and men. The transports were reduced to the establishment of a single Battalion under Lieutenant L. A. Ramsay of the 8th Battalion. All supernumerary staff were sent to the 35th Infantry Base Camp at Harfleur near to Le Havre.

This enforced loss of identity was very keenly felt by both Battalions, but it proved the means of increasing the esprit de corps throughout the Companies. This had always been of a very high standard in both Battalions, but was more noticeable than ever after the amalgamation. In consequence of the amalgamation reducing the number of the Battalions in the Brigade and its general weakness through losses, the 5th Battalion the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment was transferred to it on June 11th.

The rest came to an end on June 11th, and in the evening the Companies marched independently to dug-outs in the grounds of the chateau at Kruisstraat just to the south of Ypres, Headquarters sharing dug-outs with the 9th Battalion. Many of the dug-outs were panelled with wood and fitted out with furniture from the houses in Ypres. The following day the Battalion was ordered to Sanctuary

Wood and after dusk moved up through Kruistraat, crossing the canal south of Ypres and skirting the town as far as the Lille Gate, thence by Zillebeke Lake, across the Zillebeke road, past Yeomanry Post and Maple Copse. On reaching Sanctuary Wood it was difficult in the darkness to find dug-outs, so most of the Battalion spent the night in the open. There was a little shelling and a large number of bullets flying about the wood, but only one man was hit, Private T. H. Fletcher being wounded.

On the northern edge of Sanctuary Wood, which belied its name, lay the village of Hooge astride the Menin road and the chateau, through the stables of which ran the front line trenches. No longer ago than the end of April Hooge had been well behind the line and full of troops billeted in its houses. The trenches ran north and south along the eastern edge of the wood, those held by the Germans including the features of Stirling Castle and Clonmel Copse.

The Battalion now came under the orders of the 149th Infantry Brigade, and for the first two days was occupied in work on the defences of Hooge. There was little shelling in the wood, but very many bullets came over from the front line, Corporal Longridge being wounded on the 14th and Lance-Corporal Pitt and Private Shelton on the 15th from this cause.

As the 149th Infantry Brigade was to attack the German position on June 16th the Battalion, at 2.30 a.m. on that date, moved into the second line trenches and the "switch" running east and west through Sanctuary Wood. These were very crowded, but fortunately casualties were not suffered as a result.

Ten minutes after arrival in the trenches a very intense bombardment was commenced to which the Germans immediately replied. This lasted till 4.15 a.m. when the infantry, Northumberland Fusiliers, assaulted. Part of the attack was visible from Sanctuary Wood, and it appeared to make excellent progress. At 6.30 a.m. a verbal message was received from the officer commanding Zouave Wood, which lay to the north-west of Sanctuary Wood, that he was about to attack the German trenches to the north of Hooge and asking for support. The Germans at this time were reported to be evacuating their trenches and running back across the open. Two Companies under Major Hawdon (6th Battalion) were at once sent off into Zouave Wood and the other two held ready to follow. At 7 a.m. a second verbal message, confirmed in writing at 7.20 a.m., was received cancelling the move for the present and the Companies then returned to the trenches. All day heavy artillery fire continued, increasing in density between 3 and 4 p.m., when the Germans delivered a counter-attack. At dusk the firing died away almost completely. Working parties were then ordered for the Hooge

defences, but at 8 p.m. these were cancelled and the Battalion instead ordered to stand by ready to man the front line. An hour later it moved up, relieving the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. After completion of the relief the Battalion was disposed as follows: B Company in Trench B9; A Company (less 1 platoon) in Trenches H13 and 14 up to the chateau stables; C Company in the stables and Trench 15 as far as Island Post; D Company in Trench H16 in support. The platoon of A Company was also kept as a support in Sanctuary Wood. Battalion Headquarters was in Zouave Wood. All the trenches, especially B9, had been badly damaged by the German shell-fire and a great deal of work had to be carried out on them during the night. Bugler Sergeant Miles was wounded and Private G. Dent was killed.

A short time prior to moving forward to the relief of the Northumberland Fusiliers Major J. H. Smeddle was ordered to return to Bassebourn to take over the duties of Brigade Transport Officer.

All June 17th there was heavy shelling, though extraordinarily little damage was done, but Sergeant Masters was killed and Sergeant Makepeace and one man wounded. Part of Trench B9 was rendered untenable by daylight, being blown in, and the communication trench in Sanctuary Wood knocked about. A German machine-gun which fired on a crossing in the wood was effectually knocked out by artillery fire.

During the night of the 17/18th June a party of bombers under Lieutenant T. A. Saint carried out a very excellent enterprise against the Germans beyond a block in the trench near to the chateau stables. After an uneventful day on the 18th the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and a Battalion of the Wilts. Regiment between them relieved the Battalion at night. The machine-gun section was not, however, relieved, but remained in Armagh Wood for a further eighteen days before rejoining at Locre. During this period the machine-guns of the 5th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment were attached to the Battalion whilst in the trenches. After relief the Battalion moved into F huts near Vlamertinghe, remaining here until the 20th, when the 50th Division was transferred from the 5th Corps to the 2nd Corps under Sir Charles Ferguson, and at 7.30 a.m. the Battalion marched via Ouderdom and Locre to Dranoutre to a bivouac at Corunna Farm. A few fields away was encamped the 10th Battalion, the first Kitchener's Army Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry, which had recently come out from England.

The 7th Field Company Royal Engineers, a Regular Unit, was transferred to the Brigade on June 20th, so that each Brigade of the Division now always included a Field Company Royal Engineers in its group.

It was whilst in the Sanctuary Wood sector that the transport journeyed nightly along the Menin road, past Hell Fire Corner, and thence parallel to the front line to Sanctuary Wood, a route in range of rifle bullets its whole length with resultant minor casualties on most nights. To transport of any kind the Menin road must remain an outstanding feature. Those who see it to-day, a broad well-kept highway with comfortable houses on each side, can never realize how like the broad straight way to "another place" it seemed to transport each night during the war.

On June 21st the Corps Commander, Sir Charles Ferguson, visited the Brigade and addressed the Battalions. In the course of his remarks he said, "that the Brigade was now going into a sector of the line which, compared with that from which it had just come, was in the nature of a convalescent home. The 46th Division, which the 50th Division was relieving, was a good working Division, and the trenches would be found to be very excellent, and it was therefore up to the 50th Division to keep them as good and even improve them, showing thereby that it was as good a working as it had proved itself a fighting Division." He was not disappointed.

In the evening the Battalion proceeded into the line, relieving the trenches held by the 4th Battalion the Lincolnshire Regiment in front of the Lindenhoeck cross-roads from Trench E1 on the right to the barricade on the Kemmel-Wytschaete road on the left. The Headquarters of the Battalion were most luxuriously accommodated in a small villa on the eastern slope of Kemmel Hill.

The Battalion had now entered upon a phase of normal trench warfare which was to last for some twelve months until it was called upon to take its part in the first great Battle of the Somme, in 1916, if we except the stormy period of "The Salient," to which it returned from the middle of December, 1915, to the beginning of April, 1916. The daily entries in the War Diary for the next few months record that many "quiet" days were the lot of the Battalion, a "quiet" day being one on which little more took place than the usual morning and evening "hate" on both sides, but even on such days casualties, single, and in twos and threes occurred, gradually increasing the Battalion's already heavy list. The arrival of the mail, relieving and being relieved were the main happenings of interest, and incidents such as that of June 23rd when about 5 p.m. the Germans held up a board on which was chalked "Lemberg is taken," together with many "Hochs" and firing of flares in their lines, to which a reply in the form of five rounds, rapid for luck, was made, helped to enliven the monotony. To the foregoing may be added the issue of a rum ration.

In the sector now occupied the German trenches, which varied in distance away from forty yards on the right to about two hundred

D

on the left, were on higher (and drier) ground and included a commanding strong point in Spanbroekmollen. The trenches faced the Messines Ridge and were approached from the Lindenhoeck cross-roads by a long communication trench, Regent Street, which about three-quarters of the way up branched off at a shallow valley which was crossed in the open, being dead ground, into Vigo Street and Piccadilly on the right and Pall Mall on the left. Immediately on the right flank and slightly forward of the front line trenches was a strong point, "The Bull Ring," in course of construction by the Battalion holding the trenches to the right flank. To join up with this a sap was being pushed out from E2 Trench across the front of E1, from which there was no field of fire. Close to this sap was the entrance to a mine which had been begun, but work on this appeared to have been abandoned for the time being at all events. The left flank rested on the Kemmel-Wytschaete road by a barricade. It was near to here that Corporal Robinson, when wounded by a bullet which pierced both hands, his nose and a pair of field glasses through which he was observing the German trench, remarked as he handed the glasses back to a Sergeant, "I'm sorry, Sergeant, your glasses are broken." When taken over the trenches had no protection in the form of a barbed wire entanglement in front, and the first work carried out therefore was the construction of "knife-rests" which were made immediately behind the trenches by Royal Engineers brought up and placed in position after dark.

Behind the trench system rose Kemmel Hill. By far the highest ground, it commanded an excellent view, not only of the German lines from Wytschaete to Messines, but also of the whole of the Ypres Salient. Thickly wooded, it gave good cover, and though so close to the line the several small farms on its slopes were still occupied and worked even in 1916 when the Battalion again held this sector for a short time, and these afforded very pleasant and comfortable billets.

Kemmel Village at the foot of the hill on the north-west side, though shelled, still held a number of civilians, and the Hôtel de Petite Ypres continued to supply the thirsty ones as they passed through. Perhaps the transport appreciated the change to this sector even more than the Companies, for their billets were in comfortable farms first at Dranoutre and later in Locre, and the journey to the trenches took but a bare half-hour and was through cultivated fields, fields from which the sweet smell of the hay then being made was a delightful contrast to the odour of Ypres and its surroundings.

Until the evening of June 27th the Battalion remained in the line; it was then, with the exception of C Company, relieved partly by the 7th Battalion (D.L.I.) and partly by the 5th Battalion Loyal North

Lancashire Regiment and moved into huts at Locre, a very pleasant village at the foot of Mont Rouge, some three and a half miles from Bailleul and about a quarter of a mile from the French frontier.

Bailleul, which the few days' rest at Locre provided an opportunity of visiting, contained, besides good shops and a rather excellent hotel, "The Faucon," a very popular rendezvous for tea or dinner, some interesting relics of the Spanish occupation of Flanders in the old Belfry and the Hôtel de Ville. These, unfortunately, together with most of the town, were reduced to mere heaps of stone following the German Offensive on the Lys in April, 1918, when, after their successes in the first two weeks, an effort was made to capture Kemmel and the other hills of the chain running west, thus opening the road to the sea and the Channel Ports.

On July 3rd the Battalion returned to the line for a second tour, relieving the 7th Battalion in the same trenches as were occupied on the first occasion. On the following day Brigadier-General H. Martin, who had commanded the Brigade since it joined the British Expeditionary Force, relinquished command and was succeeded by Brigadier-General J. S. M. Shea. During the present tour information was received from the artillery observation post on Kemmel Hill that a new work was visible in front of the right of Trench F5 and it was thought that the Germans were placing gas cylinders in it, and a further disturbing report was that the Germans were mining under the sector. Apart from these matters the sector certainly lived up to its reputation for quietness, and this was fortunate, for owing to sickness and other reasons the number of officers available for duty in the 8th Battalion section of the front line became reduced to three only, Captain J. A. S. Ritson, Captain E. H. Veitch and Lieutenant N. Clark. Captain Ritson was actually ill himself but remained at duty, and Lieutenant Clark went down with an attack of trench fever on the very last day of the tour which, after nearly a week of normal days (according to the War Diary), ended on July 9th, when the 7th Battalion again took over the trenches. A and D Companies proceeded to dug-outs on the north side of Kemmel Hill whilst B and C Companies moved to shelters on the west of the La Clytte-Kemmel road, the Battalion being in support to the Brigade. Only two casualties occurred during the period, Lance-Corporal Robinson and Private H. J. Scott being wounded.

On the 13th all officers reconnoitred the General Headquarters line and the switch on Kemmel Hill, so as to be familiar with these in the event of it becoming necessary to occupy them, as there were rumours of a German concentration on the front. In the evening the Battalion unfortunately suffered a number of casualties amongst a working party near the Lindenhoeck cross-roads which was shelled.

Private Mason was killed and Sergeant Heptenstall, Privates Holmes, Jackson, Mann and Bugler Weatherall wounded.

Unlike most rumours, that concerning the mine proved to be correct, for on the evening of July 14th a mine was actually sprung by the Germans under the G Sector Trenches, just north of those which had been held by the Battalion. The 9th Battalion which was holding the sector at the time had five men buried. A heavy bombardment and intense rifle-fire followed but quietened down to normal after a short time without any infantry action.

The 15th July proved a most eventful day in that leave to the United Kingdom began, two officers and three men being allowed away together. All those fortunate enough to go on leave—some complained that their turn never came—will remember the unfailing remark of the old soldier "Ticket Collector" on the landing-stage at Boulogne to the men streaming down the gangway from the leave boat, "Now then boys, all tickets for Kingdom Come," which called forth many and varied rejoinders. On the same day the prospect of an early move to some other part of the line was made evident by the arrival in the area of the 84th Infantry Brigade, 28th Division, in relief of the 50th Division, and on the following day at 7.30 p.m. the Battalion set out from Kemmel for Armentières. The route followed was via Lore, Bailleul and Pont de Nieppe, the shorter route through Neuve Eglise being impracticable owing to shelling.

CHAPTER V

ARMENTIÈRES

SOME sixteen miles on a greasy pave, on a dark, wet night, in full marching order and with feet not yet recovered from the inactivity of the trenches was a march not easily to be forgotten. Some of the Battalions in the Brigade stoutly maintained that they had no stragglers, but nearing Armentières the many dim lights lining the roadside were not glow-worms, nor were they all men of the 6/8 Composite Battalion.

Armentières was reached at 1 a.m. on the 18th. Five and a half hours was not bad time for the march under such conditions. Billets for the Companies were in the Blue Factory, Battalion Headquarters being near by in the Rue Sadi Carnot. There was little time for sleep when all were settled in, and after a hurried breakfast all officers left at 9 a.m. to inspect the trenches in front of Chapelle d'Armentières to be taken over in the evening.

At 7.30 p.m. the Battalion marched off and relieved the 4th Battalion Royal Scots, 80th Infantry Brigade, in Trenches 67, 68 and a Company of the Monmouth Regiment in Trench 69, the Companies being then disposed as follows: Trench 67, B Company. Trench 68, C Company. Trench 69, A Company. The Lille Post, D Company. Battalion Headquarters occupied Haystack Farm.

The Lindenhoeck trenches were good, but these at Armentières surpassed them in every way. Two communication trenches, Leith Walk and Lothian Avenue, each wide enough for two-thirds of the way to have allowed a hand-cart to pass comfortably, led up to the front line. Dug-out accommodation was ample and comfortable. New bread, eggs and butter were available at the foot of the communication trenches, whilst vegetables in plenty were obtainable with very little risk in the fields of the ruined Pigot's Farm through which Trench 69 ran. Some comparative idea of the peacefulness of the sector in July, 1915, may be gathered from the fact that it was reported that an old woman was seen driving her cows to pasture close to the support line trenches. A pathetic reminder, however, of the tragedy

of war was the grave of a baby, with a tiny shoe tied to a post at its head, just behind the parados of Trench 69 close to the ruins of the farm.

The German trenches varied from two hundred and fifty to three hundred yards in distance from the front line.

Quiet though the sector was, the Composite Battalion was unfortunate in its first seven days' occupation, losing Second-Lieutenant G. C. Robinson (6th D.L.I.) killed, Corporal R. B. Tuck and Private W. Taylor wounded. Corporal Tuck was firing when a bullet struck his rifle, smashed his thumb, the right side of his jaw, entered his shoulder, passing up over it, raising a ridge under the skin, then down and out below the shoulder blade. Further casualties occurred after the Battalion had been partly relieved, Second-Lieutenant J. C. Miller, the Battalion machine-gun officer, and one man being killed and other two wounded. All these latter belonged to the 6th Battalion personnel.

The 5th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment relieved two Companies of the Battalion on the night of July 24th, and these were billeted in the Hospice Civil, where they were joined by the remaining two Companies on the 29th after their relief in the subsidiary line and Lille Post by the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.), Battalion Headquarters being at 41 Rue Nationale, the most residential quarter of Armentières.

On July 26th Lieutenant J. A. Stenhouse, Royal Army Medical Corps, who had been wounded and taken prisoner, it will be remembered, whilst attending to the wounded at Boetleer's Farm on April 26th, rejoined the Battalion again from England, having been subsequently released by the Germans.

Armentières was shelled daily, chiefly with shrapnel, and though a large number of the inhabitants had left the town, many of the shops and estaminets remained open, reaping a harvest at war prices. Quite apart from these a surprising number of civilians still remained even in the quarters of the town nearest to the trenches. The indifference to danger shown by these is well illustrated by such incidents as on one occasion when a house in the street leading towards Chapelle d'Armentières was demolished by a shell. Even before the dust and smoke had cleared away the occupants of neighbouring houses were to be seen eagerly gathering up the fallen beams and splintered wood for use as fuel; and by the quiet remark of a waitress in one of the tea-rooms for officers in the Rue de Lille, when, as she was serving tea, a shell passed over the building and burst immediately behind it, "*Beaucoup, beaucoup obus, Messieurs.*" It was also a favourite occupation on a Sunday afternoon for many of the inhabitants, dressed in their best, to promenade up and down the road leading west out

of the town to Pont de Nieppe and watch the Germans shelling Le Bizet.

On August 1st the welcome information was received that the Composite Battalion was to be broken up and the 6th and 8th Battalions were again to resume their individuality. Major Borritt, D.S.O., The King's Own, was appointed to command the 6th Battalion and Captain Jeffries resumed the appointment of adjutant to that Battalion.

The whole of the 151st Infantry Brigade was now out of the trenches and became divisional reserve, remaining in billets until the 7th. During this period the reorganization of the 8th Battalion was carried out, only two Companies being formed, however, pending the arrival of further drafts, only one of 2 officers, 112 other ranks having arrived up to the present.

On August 7th the Composite Battalion, as such, ceased to exist, except that for discipline and administration both Battalions remained under Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull pending the arrival of Major Borritt.

On the evening of August 7th the 8th Battalion returned to the line, taking over Trenches 74 and 74s from the 4th East Yorkshire Regiment. B Company moving into the front line and A Company being in support. A further portion of the front line, Trench 75, was taken over the following day, and again on the 10th Trench 75s was taken over from the 5th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire. This sector was held by the Battalion for the next six days and proved rather more full of incident than the previous tour on the right of the present position. Soon after 2 a.m. on the 9th a very heavy bombardment started to the north in the direction of Ploegsteert, and an hour later the German artillery opened upon the Battalion trenches, and this continued until after 4 a.m. There was, however, only one casualty, Private White of A Company being killed, and very little damage was done to the trenches. After this the day continued quiet. The 10th was without incident. On the 11th Major Borritt arrived and took over the 6th Battalion, so that from this day both Battalions existed as separate Units for all purposes. This day passed quietly except for a little shelling of Trench 74, though there was a good deal both on the right and left, and at night the Germans used a powerful searchlight from Perenchies church tower on the trenches, probably for the purpose of interfering with any working parties there might be out in front. Two days later a further searchlight appeared from a position about eight hundred yards distant. Opposite to Trench 74 was situated a German strong point, the Black Redoubt, and on the 12th this was strafed by howitzers. Only seven rounds, however, had been fired, with good effect, when the German retalia-

tion severed the telephone communications and the shoot had to be abandoned.

On August 13th Lieutenant P. Kirkup, with a party, made an endeavour to ambush a German patrol in No Man's Land, the route of which had been marked down, but unfortunately the Germans failed to put in an appearance. Early in the morning, however, the Battalion snipers had the satisfaction of bagging two Germans who were working on the parapet of their trench. A further casualty occurred during the day, Private G. Dent being killed. During the night the Battalion was relieved by the 6th Battalion and moved into billets in the Asylum, Armentières, where it remained until the 19th, then returning to its old billets in the Hospice Civil with Headquarters again in the Rue Nationale.

Lieutenant N. Clark was now in charge of the transport as Lieutenant L. A. Ramsay had been appointed Brigade Transport Officer. The transport was very comfortably settled in a factory at the west end of the town on the bank of the River Lys, and the men were able to indulge in bathing in the somewhat doubtfully clean water of the river. An old boat was also discovered and excursions made as far as was safe up and down the stream which, however, was so overgrown in parts owing to disuse that progress was very laboured and this soon ceased to be indulged in as a form of pleasure. The days passed quietly with nothing worthy of comment. A draft of fifty-nine other ranks arrived on the 23rd from the base, and this included a number who had served previously with the Battalion and been evacuated on account of wounds or sickness. On the 25th five officers belonging to the 17th Battalion reported: Second-Lieutenants J. Schofield, J. Corringham, A. M. Jones, R. Harrison and W. Lawson. The same day, at 8 p.m., the Battalion proceeded to relieve the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) in Trench 67, B Company taking over the front line and A Company the subsidiary line and Lille Post.

Immediately in front of this sector and on the north side of the Lille road lay Wez Macquart, a semi-ruined village, through the edge of which ran the German lines. During the previous tour in Trenches 67, 68 and 69 in July, sounds of German transport were heard nightly to the south and south-east of the village, and as this was again heard on two or three successive nights a "strafe" was organized in conjunction with a battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps (28th Division) on the right. Machine-guns were laid on various points and on the Lille road by day, and at 10 p.m. when the German transport was heard, fire was opened for ten minutes, whilst at the same time the artillery fired a few rounds at likely places. A few minutes later the Germans retaliated with heavy rifle and machine-gun

fire for about five minutes but without doing any damage. Between midnight and half-past the 31st Trench Howitzer Battery threw five bombs from their 3.7 howitzers, four of which appeared effective but drew no retaliation. During the remainder of the night there was a lot of shouting in the German lines, this usually indicating a relief. On the whole a very quiet time was spent during the tour, though snipers in Wez Macquart proved very troublesome, but one of these was accounted for by Lance-Corporal Stokoe on the 30th, being seen to fall from a window. On the 31st some excitement was caused by the sound of tapping in the "Botha Mine" (Trench 67). Constant watch was kept but nothing further was heard.

On the evening of the 31st A Company relieved B Company in the front line and the days continued very quiet, all operations being on the part of the Battalion. As the German snipers continued very troublesome from the buildings in Wez Macquart, a panoramic sketch indicating the houses used by them was made and sent to the Brigade, with the result that a howitzer battery put forty shells into them, after which there was no more sniping. The losses of the Battalion due to this cause were Private Featherstone, who was badly wounded in the head, Private Strachen and another man, both also wounded.

The weather became very wet on September 1st and continued so for three or four days. Patrols went out regularly each night under Lieutenant A. M. Gelsthorpe and Lieutenant F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson. On the 1st, whilst a patrol was out, a German came close to the trench but being mistaken for one of the patrol was unfortunately not fired on.

Captain J. A. Stenhouse, Royal Army Medical Corps, who had not recovered from the effects of his wound and imprisonment, was evacuated to hospital, and was succeeded as medical officer by Captain G. R. Badenoch, Royal Army Medical Corps.

It is interesting to note a remark in the War Diary of this date that the appearance and turn out generally of the men was far ahead of what it was before the Battalion came to France.

A new style of gas helmet was now issued with strong circular eye-pieces of glass and a mouth-piece containing a valve which allowed for breathing "out." The original protection against gas which was issued immediately after the first gas attack in April had, it will be remembered, consisted simply of cotton waste soaked in hypophosphate and contained in a gauze wrapping and which was tied over the mouth and pressed into the nostrils. Those who for any reason had not this protection in some cases depended upon a sock or handkerchief damped with urine, which also proved effective, but neither of these methods gave any protection for the eyes. The next development was the P. helmet, a flannel bag treated with a

chemical solution, which had an oblong window of mica, the ends of the helmet being tucked in all round the neck under the collar of the service jacket. As all breathing in and out had to be through the material, opinion was divided as to whether it was better to die from asphyxiation by this means or from the gas. Great difficulty, too, was experienced in preserving the mica window intact, for this cracked and broke on the least provocation, and once this happened the helmet was useless. Various dodges were resorted to in the endeavour to avoid this, the most effective being to cut a thin flat piece of wood slightly larger than the window against which it was placed and the helmet carefully folded round it, and it could then be carried without risk of damage. This P. helmet issued in September, 1915, was a great improvement, being somewhat cooler, but it still retained the defect of the breathing in having to be done through the material and made the giving and hearing of orders, when worn, very difficult; the glass eye-pieces too became quickly fogged on the inside, thus obscuring the vision, to prevent which, some time later, a paste in small tins was issued with which the glass was polished, and so that trouble was overcome. As an additional safeguard each man retained one of the old P. helmets, there being at the time an insufficient supply of the new design to allow of an issue of two per man. A very careful daily inspection of the condition of the helmets was necessary, as these required re-dipping in the solution after a certain period and after use in gas, and great care had also to be taken in wet weather to guard against their becoming wet and thereby it being impossible to breathe in through the material. At times when the wind was in a dangerous direction, i.e., blowing from the enemy towards the British trenches, what was termed the "Alert Position" for the helmet was enforced; in this the helmet was placed on the head under the cap, but rolled up clear of the eyes, in readiness to be drawn down instantly. Owing to the distance to which gas travelled effectively behind the trenches it was found necessary later on to issue a regulation laying down that the helmet was to be always carried on the person when within a certain prescribed area. There was a story current about this time concerning a well-known General who, on his way to visit the trenches, discovered after he had gone some distance that he had omitted to bring his helmet, and one of his staff thereupon borrowed a satchel from a man for the use of the General. Whilst passing along a trench the General found a man minus his helmet, and after trying to impress upon the culprit the seriousness of the omission, said: "You see, even I always carry one," and putting his hand into the borrowed satchel drew out a pair of old and dirty socks.

The Battalion was due to be relieved on September 6th,

Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull proceeded on leave the previous day and Captain Stevens assumed temporary command.

On September 6th, after relief, the Battalion occupied a factory in the centre of Armentières as a billet, Headquarters being nearby in 42 Rue Marle and 20 Boulevard Faïd Herbe, and remained here until the 12th. During this time the Commander of the Second Army, General Sir H. Plumer, inspected the Battalion and expressed much satisfaction with the appearance and turn out of the men. The town was badly shelled on the 11th with incendiary shells, fired apparently from howitzers, containing phosphorus and a celluloid substance like xylonite and with only a small bursting charge.

On September 12th Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull returned from leave, and in the evening the Battalion relieved Trench 67 near the Distillery and also took over Farm de Butternick from the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.). During the night and in the early hours of the following morning the Germans indulged in a good deal of shouting across such expressions as "I want to go home," "Wait till October," and "Come and fight," interspersed at intervals with piccolo solos. At 5 a.m. a heavy bombardment broke out and lasted for three-quarters of an hour in the area held by the 27th Division to the south.

The Germans opposite the sector now held were identified as the XIX, 2nd Royal Saxon, Army Corps consisting of the 24th (2nd Saxon) and 40th (4th Saxon) Divisions. A prisoner captured on the 16th south of the River Lys near to Frelinghem, belonging to the 70th Landwehr Regiment, a North Prussian Unit, stated that the old friends of the 50th Division, the 89th Saxons, had been sent to the Russian front, not being sufficiently active on the Western front.

Except for a strafe by the trench howitzers on the 15th and an incident which occurred during the trial of the new West Bomb Thrower on the 16th when the wooden arms were hurled over the parapet in the process of firing, in the endeavour to recover which after dark Lance-Corporal Barren and Private Downes were both wounded, the days passed very monotonously. There was continuous signalling one night by a searchlight in the neighbourhood of Lille, presumably to aircraft. On the evening of the 18th the 6th Battalion took over the line and a return was made to billets in the College des Garçons and the Hospice Civil with Headquarters again in the Rue Nationale.

The spirit of the men was extraordinarily good at this time. Their part in the Second Battle of Ypres had given them a quiet confidence whilst the quieter months in the Lindenhoeck and Armentières sectors had only increased their enthusiasm for proving themselves "top-dogs" in every little incident with the enemy during these days of trench warfare. One recalls the glee with which the

bombers handled their uncertain weapons. The recent drafts had contained a fairly high percentage of original members of the Battalion who had recovered from their wounds or sickness, and the old Territorial spirit still existed very strongly; indeed there was consternation amongst all ranks when it was rumoured that owing to a fracas between some Territorials and men of a Kitchener Battalion in Bailleul, in which the Canadians took the part of the Territorial personnel, that the distinguishing "T" was to be no longer worn. If such an order was ever promulgated it was not enforced and the "T" of which all were so proud continued to be worn.

About this time too there was much speculation amongst the men as to the duration of the war; possibly this was due to the report that when a trench mortar bomb dropped into "The Mound" opposite the trenches a retort came in English: "If you want these — trenches you can have them in October." So far as the month was concerned the speaker was not far wrong, but it was nearly three years later.

Preparations for a coming offensive to the south, "The Battle of Loos," were now in their final stages, and during the days the Battalion was in billets it was employed in making small bundles of straw which later on were used along the front of the Armentières sector, being placed out in No Man's Land and set fire to after being damped so as to produce a dense smoke screen and thus delude the Germans into expecting the attack at this point, compelling them to retain reserves there which would otherwise have been used at Loos. One party was engaged in this work at Pont de Nieppe and another in a field on the outskirts of Armentières; this latter party was unfortunately shelled, Privates Brannigan, Cranston and Marshall being wounded.

On September 23rd very heavy artillery fire was apparent to the south, and continued night and day. The 151st Infantry Brigade on the 24th was placed in reserve formation to the Second Army. Ammunition was made up to 170 rounds per man, and every man also carried one Véry light. All were confined to billets in readiness. On the day following, September 25th, began the British attack with five Divisions round Loos and Hulluch, which with fifteen subsidiary actions lasted until October 19th.

The Battle of Loos, as this came to be officially termed, is remarkable as being the first occasion on which asphyxiating gas was used by the British. The use of this was only decided upon after very long and grave consideration, it being felt that in fairness to the troops they should not be denied the support of a weapon so dastardly introduced and freely used against them by the Germans. The French also attacked at the same time in Champagne, but although

they made some progress, were ultimately unsuccessful after suffering very heavy losses.

As a result of the attack at Loos the Germans opposite to Armentières became very nervous and shelled the town heavily. One shell fell in the quartermaster's store in the Rue Bayard, wounding Second-Lieutenant E. Fisher and killing the post corporal, Corporal Tait, one of the original members of the old B Company, the Bede College Contingent of the Battalion. Apart from this, the continued shelling of the town, and the big battle progressing to the south, the 25th and 26th passed uneventfully. On the evening of the 26th the Brigade ceased to be part of the Second Army Reserve, and soon after midday on the 27th normal conditions were resumed. During the afternoon of the 27th between thirty and forty shells fell in the town, some close to the billets. At 11.30 p.m. the Battalion was ordered to be ready to proceed on the following morning to The Tissage, Houplines, there to relieve the 9th Battalion for the trenches, but these orders were cancelled later and instead guards were ordered to be found for all bridges and control posts along the River Lys and a garrison for Lys Farm, the Battalion being held in readiness to move in one hour by night and two hours by day. Lieutenant E. H. Motum, who had been wounded on April 26th, rejoined the Battalion together with Lieutenants Gould and Herald.

In the evening of September 30th the Companies moved off independently to take over Trenches 81, 82, 83 and their support lines to the east of Houplines, relieving the 6th Battalion. Although the night, which was cold and wet, was very quiet, Private R. Wheldon was wounded whilst going into the trenches. Second-Lieutenant A. V. McLare joined the Battalion from the second line just prior to the move to the trenches.

Five very quiet days passed in the line. No hostile machine-gun fired during the whole tour, and there was very little artillery fire on the part of the enemy, this pointing to a possible transfer of all men and guns that could be spared to the battle around Loos of which very little news came through, but the artillery fire in that direction still continued very heavy. Not a single German patrol was observed, although sentries were posted well out into No Man's Land to watch for these as well as patrols who remained out all night.

On October 2nd Private W. Hall was wounded under unusual circumstances. About 4 a.m. he was lying out in a listening post, and being very cold began kicking his legs up and down in an effort to restore the circulation; whilst doing so he was hit in the leg by a random bullet. Two days later a second casualty occurred, Private G. Walton being wounded whilst superintending the firing of a fixed rifle battery.

As the Royal Flying Corps reported double the usual amount of railway movement in Roubaix and Lille and a lot of movement about Perenchies, a special look-out was kept at this time, but there were no apparent developments on the Battalion's immediate front.

On the evening of October 5th the trenches were taken over by the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.), and on completion of the relief billets in "The Tissage," a large factory on the west of Houplines, were occupied. Private J. Brown was wounded whilst being relieved in his listening post, this making the third casualty in a more than usually quiet tour of the trenches.

After nearly six months in Flanders with the Battalion as Second-in-Command, Major J. H. Smeddle left during the night of October 5th, having been ordered home to resume duty with the North-Eastern Railway. With the exception of Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull and the Adjutant, Captain Stevens, there was no one in the Battalion who could have been more missed than Major Smeddle, especially by those who had shared a part if not the whole of his long service in it. He was not forgotten, for even as late as 1918, when the Battalion was passing through Berques, a man exclaimed on seeing a North-Eastern Railway engine doing duty with the Royal Ordnance Department, "That's one of Major Smeddle's engines."

Houplines was a suburb of Armentières, and although so close to the line that the communication trenches were entered from it even in October, 1915, it had not been greatly damaged by shell-fire; the church was certainly in ruins, but the great majority of the houses remained intact and afforded comfortable billets. The civilian population, however, had all gone. Whilst in support in Houplines guards on various points had to be found by the Battalion. One of these was a distillery and thereby hangs a tale. Whilst C Company were finding this guard it became known by means of the Company Secret Service that there was still some champagne left in the building. Lieutenant "Jimmy" Schofield, always ready for anything, thereupon made up his mind that this must be secured at all costs. He therefore paraded three of the officers' servants in full marching order but with their packs stuffed with paper, etc., and marched them down to the distillery. There he filled the packs with the bottles of the last case of champagne and whatever else he could lay his hands upon and marched them back again to Company Headquarters, which needless to say lived in style for the next few days. Fortunately none of the Brigade Brass-hats or other obstructionists were about, their attention at the moment being fully occupied in inquiring into the dastardly conduct of certain officers who had caused their servants to remove a number of chairs from a deserted house into their mess in order that they might all be able to sit down at the same time.

The first souvenir in the form of a German helmet fell to the lot of a man who was sleeping in a cellar of one of the houses, where it must have lain in its cover ever since the Germans retired from Armentières in the October of 1914.

On October 7th A Company relieved a Company of the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in Trench 80, and the following day B Company relieved a Company of the 5th Battalion Loyal North Lancashires for a few hours whilst these latter got baths. The Germans continued very quiet, though there was rather more artillery fire; even the putting of rifle grenades and bombs into their trenches drew no reply.

On the morning of the 10th a Company of the 15th Battalion (D.L.I.) came up for instruction, remaining until the 13th.

In connection with some operations of the First Army a demonstration was carried out on the 13th October against the German trenches, commencing at 2 p.m., before which hour the men were all moved into shelter trenches and Battalion Headquarters to their battle position in Wessex Avenue, whilst A Company in Houplines moved into the cellars of the billets. The Germans replied very quickly. In the immediate neighbourhood no heavy guns fired and quite a large proportion of the shells were "duds." Only one casualty resulted, a signaller being wounded, whilst two dug-outs were blown in and a barricade knocked down. The shelter trenches (the system of which was at that time thought good but was afterwards abandoned) consisted of very narrow and deep slits dug a short distance behind the fire trench and strongly reveted with timber. Only sentries were left in the fire trench in splinter proof shelters; one of these was actually hit by a high-explosive shell which fractured the wooden supports, but the two men occupying it were uninjured.

At 3.30 p.m. all along the Divisional front was started the throwing of fumite bombs filled with phosphorus and petrol which gave off dense clouds of white smoke. As soon as this appeared the German Artillery fire increased, and at last their machine-guns opened and in places rifle-fire, though not on the Battalion's immediate front. This continued till 6 p.m. when the situation resumed its normal state. The Germans were, however, very jumpy all through the night and there was more rifle-fire than usual. Fire was kept up on the German wire to prevent repairs.

The day following the demonstration was very quiet indeed and entirely devoid of incident. On the 15th A relieved B Company in the line and a platoon of the 13th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers came up for instruction.

The situation continued quiet with a few shells only which fell in

the rear of Trench 80 support. It was interesting to observe with a telescope the faces of the Germans in a large periscope erected by them in their trench facing the Battalion. Even the colour of their uniforms could be distinguished.

For the next ten days the Companies continued relieving each other in the line in turn. A new system of placing the barbed wire entanglement in a wide ditch dug in front of the parapet instead of in the open was now adopted.

On October 22nd Major G. A. Stevens was appointed Acting Brigade-Major, vice Major E. R. Clayton who took over command of the 9th Battalion during the absence on leave of its Commanding Officer and Captain P. Kirkup became Acting Adjutant. The situation still remained very quiet, patrols going out regularly without meeting any Germans.

On the evening of the 25th the 10th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (62nd Infantry Brigade, 21st Division) relieved A Company in the line and both Companies were then together in The Tissage.

A Composite Battalion from all the units of the 50th Division took part in an inspection by His Majesty the King near to Bailleul on October 27th. This Battalion was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel E. Vaux of the 7th Battalion (D.L.I.). The 8th Battalion sent two platoons under Captain J. A. S. Ritson and Lieutenant C. W. Baldwin. After the inspection the following telegram was received from General Sir H. Plumer, commanding the Second Army, "His Majesty the King desires me to say that he was very pleased with the soldierly bearing of the troops and with all he saw."

Two further tours of duty in the trenches in front of Houplines followed, October 28th to November 3rd, and November 9th to 12th. Very bad weather was experienced practically the whole time, the almost incessant rain necessitating continuous work repairing the falling trenches and draining them, some of which the rising of the River Lys threatened to flood.

On November 2nd a draft of forty-one men from the third line arrived, and on the 9th Second-Lieutenants F. V. P. Perrott and W. Forster joined from England.

From the night of November 3rd, when the 5th Battalion Loyal North Lancashires took over the trenches, until the 9th the Battalion remained at The Tissage finding working parties. On the 9th it returned to Trenches 88 and 89 for what proved to be the last tour in the Armentières sector. Battalion Headquarters on this occasion were very comfortably settled in "The White House," in the vicinity of which there was no shelling, doubtless on account of the fact that it was within a few yards of the lock on the River Lys, which if

damaged or destroyed would result in the flooding of the German trenches in which direction the course of the river ran.

This final tour was passed very peacefully and without any casualties, and in the early morning of November 12th the 15th Battalion (D.L.I.) took over the trenches. The relief must have been observed by the Germans for they shelled Houplines, a most unusual thing at this hour.

Billets at the College des Jeune Filles and in the Rue Quesnoy in Armentières were occupied till the following day when the Battalion said "good-bye" to Armentières and marched to La Creche, a village some four miles from Bailleul and close to Steenwerck, the railhead for Armentières.

Though the almost daily shelling of Armentières during the latter part of the Battalion's stay there had to a great extent detracted from its reputation as a health resort, very many happy memories were carried away. Dinner parties at Lucien's in the big square of the Eglise Saint-Vaast and in the cellars of "Madame's" near to the railway station, but above all of the 50th Divisional Concert Party, the "Jesmond Jesters" in the Ecole Professionel which included the well-known ladies "Lanoline" and "Vaseline" who had previously risen to fame in the 6th Division "Follies," others of the party to which a very great deal was owed being Major P. P. Phillips of the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, Captain "Teddy" Abraham of the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.), and Captain Snowball, Royal Army Service Corps.

All Battalions will have recollections of some place on the front which appealed to them as rest (or otherwise) places, but probably few will have a more kindly feeling for any place than the Battalion had for Armentières. The transport who found billets under cover for the first time in an old factory on the banks of the Lys had certainly a more affectionate feeling for the ramshackle old building than they would perhaps ever have had if it had been the modernized factory now standing on the site. The transport's work was simple; the road to the trenches ran chiefly through the town no matter what part of the trenches the Battalion held, and except for the difficulty of travelling over the cobbles when wet there was little trouble.

During the latter part of the stay in Armentières the whole of the four Battalions' transports were "brigaded" under Captain L. A. Ramsay and the lines were in a pleasant spot near to Pont de Nieppe. The only loss in personnel suffered was that of Lance-Corporal Leslie, perhaps the best horseman, who through sickness was evacuated to hospital and his place filled by Private J. Brown from the trenches.

Out of sight, almost out of sound of war, the rest at La Creche,

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a cluster of farms, a few cottages and a small church with the Curé's house adjoining, was one of the happiest spent by the Battalion although the weather continued wet throughout the whole of the five weeks spent here and floods were general in the country around. The training was light and the utmost freedom allowed. Football, both Rugby and Association, was the principal form of recreation, matches being played with all the units in the neighbouring villages.

On the whole the inhabitants welcomed the Battalion, though here and there difficulties were placed in the way of the billeting party. One old lady was particularly obdurate till the promise of a small supply of coal secured a very comfortable billet. Usually where there was a family a few francs distributed amongst the children smoothed away all objections. Very often whilst willing to provide rooms for officers, on no account could they be persuaded to agree to the use of their kitchen for the preparation of meals, but so amazing were the persuasive powers of the officers' servants that invariably within an hour or two of entry they were in full possession of the stove and all that pertained to it, sometimes even cooking for the owners thereof also.

Perhaps the most astonishing instance of faith in the British Tommy was that of the owner of a small roadside shop on the Mont des Cats who, whenever she went to market at Bailleul, left it in charge of one of the Brigade Headquarters orderlies who was billeted on her. Save for a *permissionnaire* only old men, women, and boys were to be seen in the French and Belgian villages, and how they worked. One old lady daily passed through the sleeping (and living) room of the officers billeted in her farm at La Creche to start her day's work at 2 a.m. with a cheerful "*Bien dormis*" to any she observed to be awake. Her husband, a veteran of the Franco-German War of 1870, was always delighted to tell of his experiences, especially of the Battle of Gravelotte in which he was wounded, and to show his souvenirs.

A few days after leaving Armentières the Battalion was once more organized into four Companies. All the remaining original non-commissioned officers and men who had come to France with the Battalion were put into their old Companies and the new drafts as far as was possible by districts as in the old organization.

On November 22nd General Sir H. Plumer again visited the Brigade which marched past, the 8th Battalion leading. The men presented a very fine appearance, all signs of the strain of the trenches having disappeared. It is suggested that this earned the Battalion and, of course, the Brigade, the honour of a further spell in the Ypres Salient. The days passed all too quickly, and the hopes of the most optimistic that Christmas would be spent at La Creche

were dashed when on December 11th orders were received for a move from the 2nd to the 5th Corps at Ypres. The advance parties left for Dickebusch on the 15th, followed by the machine-gun section on the 17th and by the Battalion which entrained at Steenwerck on the 18th for Poperinghe, whence it marched via Bassebouv and Ouderdom.

CHAPTER VI

SANCTUARY WOOD. HILL 60. THE BLUFF

A NUMBER of ancient Belgian mobilization huts hidden away in a small grove of trees with a desolate farm adjoining, such was Dickebusch Camp, bounded north, south, east and west by mud, acres of mud that had once been well tilled fields, through which ran the hog-backed, deeply rutted semblance of a road, too narrow for even two limbers to pass one another, and along this two deep for the most part, the Battalion wended its painful way some two miles to its home to be for three and a half weary winter months. Contrast, however, is a great wizard, and later on Dickebusch Huts became not entirely without charm, even a place to leave with regret for the noisome, shell-stricken trenches of Hill 60 and The Bluff. Dickebusch Village itself lay about a mile nearer to the trenches on the road from La Clytte to Ypres. Though partly destroyed by shell-fire, it was in a surprisingly habitable condition considering that it was only some two or three thousand yards behind the line. Quite a number of civilians yet remained, and there were two or three shops still open, one of these a very well stocked store with tinned delicacies and some not too bad wines.

The Battalion was quickly reminded of the difference between the Salient and those parts of the line in which it had sojourned more or less pleasantly during the last six months, for at 5.15 a.m. on December 19th, the Germans gassed the line around Wieltje, and the gas even reaching Dickebusch, gas helmets had to be worn on the eastern side of the huts. There were no casualties, however. Orders to "Stand to" were received, but no infantry attack developed, though small parties of the enemy were seen to leave their trenches, and at 3.15 p.m. the Battalion proceeded to carry out a normal relief of the 6th Battalion in Brigade Reserve to the Sanctuary Wood sector. On completion of this relief Battalion Headquarters and C Company were in Maple Copse, A Company in Redoubts 2, 3, and 4, B Company in dug-outs in Sanctuary Wood, and D Company in

dug-outs on the bank of the Ypres-Commines Canal. On the march up Ypres was avoided by turning to the right about midway through Kruisstraat and following the new road laid by the Engineers, later known as Warrington Road, which cut across the Ypres-Lille road at a point about five hundred yards from the Lille Gate, thence skirting the northern end of Zillebeke Lake, it continued past "The Moated Grange" where, after the action of the 25/26th April, 1925, the first working party supplied by the Battalion was employed in burying horses, to the Zillebeke road. From here the route followed was the same as that traversed during the previous tour in this sector in June, passing Yeomanry Post to Maple Copse. Yeomanry Post will be chiefly remembered from the fact that it was used by a motor machine-gun section at night for overhead fire and the many instances on which this object failed to be attained, and the fire instead struck the rear of the trenches held by the Battalion, and there was considerable argument as a result.

And so again the transport passed on its nightly pilgrimage along the Menin road to the dump near to Zillebeke, from whence a trench tramway now conveyed rations and stores to the line. Six months' shelling since the last visit to Sanctuary Wood had not improved the way, but throughout the luck held good. On one occasion during a bout of shelling at Hell Fire Corner Lance-Corporal Murphy picked up a man of the transport of a Battalion of the Lancashire Regiment, who was lying badly wounded beside his horses and limber.

On December 20th the Battalion moved from reserve into the front line, taking over Trenches B1 to 7 from the 10th Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (9th Division). These trenches lay to the north of those held in June. The ground in front was thickly wooded, and owing to high ground between B1, 2, 3 and the German trenches these latter, some one to two hundred yards distant, could not be seen. On the right the German trenches varied from twenty-five to a hundred yards in distance away. The left was the weak point of the position. The features of the German position which will be most easily remembered were the "Bird Cage" and "Stirling Castle."

After taking over the line Major G. A. Stevens left to command the 6th Battalion on the right, Lieutenant-Colonel Jeffries having been wounded, and Captain P. Kirkup assumed the duties of Adjutant. On the left the line was held by the 12th Battalion Manchester Regiment (17th Division).

On December 23rd the Battalion was relieved by the 9th Battalion, and returned to the Brigade reserve position, where it remained until the 27th, spending a very quiet time. On Christmas Day there was

an issue of plum puddings with the rations, and these alone marked the day, the special dinner having to be held over till the return to Dickebusch. On the 27th the front line was again taken over. Rifle fire on the part of the Germans appeared to have increased since the previous tour. During the four days that followed the chief events of interest were a long duel on the night of the 28th between the Battalion's bombers and the Germans opposite the "Bird Cage," which was considerably damaged. No casualties were suffered by the Battalion, and no damage done to its trench. The bombs thrown seemed to exceed those of the Germans by three to one. The same night a patrol under Second-Lieutenant Corringham visited the German position to discover if it was actually occupied. A bomb was thrown in, and a few seconds later the Germans retaliated with a large hand grenade; fortunately the patrol was under cover in an old sap, and no one was hit. On the 30th as there was a heavy fog the opportunity was taken to investigate a German machine-gun position, and a Sergeant with Corporal M. S. Bone went out. When about forty yards away they were fired on, Corporal Bone being hit in the head and killed. The Sergeant then returned for help, but the fog lifted, and the body was not recovered till night.

The Battalion was relieved on the 31st, and returned to Dickebusch, thus being able to celebrate New Year's Day out of the line. Between December 19th and 31st eight casualties were suffered.

It was a very tired Battalion that reached the huts at Dickebusch in the early hours of New Year's Day, 1916, but after a few hours' sleep and a "clean up" all ranks were ready for the postponed Christmas dinner. There was now in Poperinghe a very well stocked Expeditionary Force canteen, so that no difficulty had been experienced in obtaining the necessary supply of "luxuries," in addition to which there was another ration issue of plum puddings. There were still many with the Battalion to whom remained memories of the Christmas dinner of 1914, but that even with the minor comforts of seats and tables was not more enjoyable than this meal in the midst of mud and desolate surroundings.

The Battalion Machine-Gun Section had not been relieved from the trenches at the same time as the Battalion itself and, unfortunately, on the evening of the first day of 1916, lost one of its oldest members, Private Whitney.

After four days' rest the Battalion returned to the line in relief of the 9th Battalion. As neighbours on the left there was now a Battalion of the Royal West Kents, and on the right the 6th Battalion. The following five days passed with the usual routine of trench life, sniping, strafes by the artillery of both sides, patrols, one of which under Second-Lieutenant Corringham penetrated the German wire

on the right of the "Bird Cage" and obtained a view of one of the German trenches. On the last day, January 9th, the "Bird Cage" was heavily strafed by trench mortars and the wire and framework protecting it destroyed. In the evening the Battalion moved back into Brigade Reserve at Maple Copse, being relieved in turn by the 9th Battalion. Four days later a return was made to the front line for a further tour, and on the 14th Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull took over command of the 151st Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General Shea having proceeded on leave, Captain J. A. S. Ritson thereupon assumed command of the Battalion.

Since the previous tour in the front line the Germans had established a machine-gun on a hill to the left of the position, and the fire from this caused very considerable trouble. The "Bird Cage" was still unrepaired, all attempts to carry this out by the Germans being unsuccessful. Second-Lieutenant Corringham, whilst once more reconnoitring this point, was wounded by a bomb, but was able to get back to his trench.

On the night of January 17th the 9th Battalion again took over the line and the Battalion returned to Dickebusch, where Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull rejoined from the Brigade. Since December the hutments had been considerably improved from the point of view of cleanliness. Some additional huts had been "scrounged" from a neighbouring temporarily unoccupied camp, "duck-board" tracks laid, and a Y.M.C.A. Recreation Marquee had made its appearance. Although so near to the Vierstraat Sector Trenches the hutments were never shelled until towards the end of March, and then only by a few isolated 5·9's, one of which fell close to the Quartermaster's store without inflicting any damage or causing any casualties. Occasionally enemy aircraft dropped bombs, but these were small and so smothered in the soft ground as to be harmless and not nearly so worrying as the showers of nose-caps and splinters which fell profusely from the barrages put up by the anti-aircraft guns whenever a German aeroplane came over the line. These were particularly unpleasant to hear hurtling down in the early morning whilst one lay in bed in a tent or a flimsy canvas roofed hut. Only one man, Private Ned Herdman, of the transport, however, had the moral courage to build himself a dug-out amidst the sarcastic comments of his companions. In spite of these daily showers of fragments only one casualty occurred, a man of the 9th Battalion being hit.

The 21st of January saw the Battalion again on its way to the trenches. From this date a Brigade Machine-Gun Company came into existence as a separate and self-contained unit, and Lieutenant A. M. Gelsthorpe and Second-Lieutenant A. M. Jones, together with the thirty-five non-commissioned officers and men of the Battalion

Machine-Gun Section were permanently transferred to its establishment.

The Sanctuary Wood sector continued to be held by the 151st Infantry Brigade throughout January and until the middle of February; the Battalion during this period alternately relieving and being relieved by the 9th Battalion and also by the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, occupying in turn the front line, the reserve position, and Dickebusch Huts. The War Diary gives but little idea of the daily life in the sector. The name "Sanctuary Wood" probably originated in October, 1914, when General Bulfin collected there a number of small parties and stragglers with strict injunctions that they were in "Sanctuary" and not to be employed except by his instructions. Perhaps its real character in 1916 is best shown by the remark of one of a couple of men labouring up the communication trench, bearing heavy loads of sandbags, who, as he dumped his burden in the mud exclaimed in disgust, "Sanctuary Wood! No — Sanctuary, and no — Wood." For by this time most of the trees were mere splintered stumps. And yet one of the reserve positions was "Lover's Walk." Its condition in the winter of 1915-16 differed greatly from that of the previous June when the Battalion held the sector for the first time. The gradual shrinking of the Salient that followed the first gas attack in the April had only by June brought Hooze and Sanctuary Wood into a permanent part of the line of trenches. Since then the struggle for this vital point in the Ypres Salient had been unceasing. At Hooze, in the August, 1915, had come the first attack with flame projectors by the Germans in which the 2nd Battalion of the Regiment suffered so severely, and now after nine months a miasma of decaying bodies overhung the whole area, seeming to penetrate even into the system of those whose lot it was to hold its trenches. Even the very food seemed tainted. It seemed too that there must be fewer troops in Flanders at this time for the holding of the line entailed longer spells in the trenches than was ever the case later on whilst the warfare remained stationary. Leave was frequently stopped during this period. There was but little sleep possible, and this only in the open in cold wet weather. The nights were not made for sleep; ceaseless watchfulness and toil, day and night. The carrying of material for the Engineers, and of rations for the troops in the front line trenches fell to the lot of the Battalion in support or reserve. The ground sodden or actually under water everywhere, not always sufficient gum boots to supply every man, and even these, difficult to struggle through the awful mud in, were little, if any, better than the ordinary boots and puttees. The state of the men's feet, abraded and swollen, when they reached Dickebusch Huts after the long miles of broken ground and the

appalling pave when the road was at length reached can easily be realized. And at Dickebusch what awaited men too exhausted almost to sit upright: cold damp wooden floors of huts with leaking roofs, never a fire, two or three more or less dry blankets, and a ground sheet. All that was possible was done—hot tea with rum, warm water for the feet, and then sleep.

Supplies of socks and flannel shirts reached the Battalion about this time through Major A. J. and Mrs. Dawson (Durham), and as the normal issue from ordnance was at the moment somewhat scanty there was great rejoicing.

The monotony of Sanctuary Wood was varied when shelling permitted by great rat hunts organized by Second-Lieutenant A. M. Jones, the proud owner of a fox-terrier. The old dug-outs were swarming with rats, and each afternoon everyone who could get off turned out and the rats were killed in scores. The enthusiasm was terrific, and the noise made must have astonished the Germans who were at no great distance away. It was the little things such as this which helped to keep one's spirits up.

It was in this sector too that one of the recently arrived drafts proclaimed with pride and excitement that he had killed a German when one night, just after he had loosed off a shot, a cat in No Man's Land set up a loud screech.

On January 23rd Lieutenant J. H. C. Herald was wounded by a sniper who enfiladed his trench from a position on the left, and died the same day in the dressing-station at Vlamertinghe.

A party of seven naval men paid a visit to the trenches on the 28th. This was in the nature of a "joy-ride." They found them very muddy and circumscribed, but apart from this they were of opinion that it was a somewhat quiet life until a Field Battery near Maple Copse began firing with the result of overwhelming retaliation by the Germans on the trenches, these being still the days of shell shortage in the Expeditionary Force.

A change was made in the method of holding the Divisional Sector on February 1st, when it was divided into two sub-sectors. The reserve Battalion of the Brigade was moved from Dickebusch to Railway Dug-outs, Transport Farm, and Canal Dug-outs. The support Battalion occupied a new position in redoubts, Consett Dug-outs, Border Lane Dug-outs, and Cumberland Dug-outs, with headquarters in Maple Copse.

Railway Dug-outs, which were also occupied by Brigade Headquarters, were constructed in and along the embankment of the Ypres-Commines railway a little to the south of Zillebeke Lake, and a short distance from the unhealthy "Shrapnel Corner" by which they were approached from the village of Trois Rois. They were

fairly comfortable, and their situation allowed of considerable freedom. Transport Farm was a group of two or three small buildings on the side of the road leading up to Zillebeke in front of Railway Dug-outs. From the dug-outs the railway continued its way in the direction of Hill 60, through "The Cutting" of evil fame and past "The Dump" near to Verbranden Molen into the enemy's lines. Only two companies were stationed here, the others being in Maple Copse and Canal Dug-outs respectively. In these latter the Company allotted to them proceeded at once to add to its enjoyment by removing from an old house nearby a piano. During this operation the Brigade Commander chanced to appear on the scene, but so far from being angry, remarked that the culprits were the happiest looking lot of men he had seen in Flanders.

Canal Dug-outs were fairly comfortable, but under observation from the German balloons, in spite of which Brigade Headquarters, with that cheery optimism which red tabs always seemed to beget, ordered the Battalion to take up one of its travelling kitchens to the spot in order that the men might have hot meals. Though there was considerable demur on the part of those who lived in the dug-outs, the kitchen was duly installed one night. As was to be expected, the first time a fire was lighted the dug-outs were promptly shelled, and no further attempt was made to use it. As, however, the Brigade had ordered that it should be left for the use of whatever unit happened to be in residence it accordingly remained in position when the Company moved up into the trenches. Then it disappeared. Some weeks later it was discovered that the Salvage Company working in the area had salvaged it as a great find, but in the meantime as the Battalion had secured one field kitchen, perfectly new, from ordnance to replace it there was no cause for complaint.

During the afternoon of February 9th, Major J. A. S. Ritson, whilst temporarily commanding the Battalion, was wounded by a shell at "Charing Cross," and so Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, who had proceeded on leave the day before, was hurriedly recalled from Boulogne which he had reached on his way home. The same afternoon Lieutenant E. H. Motum, who recovered from his wound of April 26th, 1915, had rejoined the Battalion, was buried by a shell, and had to be evacuated with shock.

On February 14th, along the whole line from Hooze to The Bluff, very great activity was shown by the Germans, but there was no infantry action except at The Bluff which, together with the trenches immediately to its north, was attacked, several trenches being captured. Some of these were retaken shortly afterwards by a counter-attack, but the enemy still retained a part of the original front line. The Battalion was at the time in Dickebusch Huts, and

was ordered to "stand to" ready to move at half an hour's notice, the 151st Infantry Brigade being transferred from Divisional to Corps Reserve.

On the night 15/16th February an unsuccessful attempt was made by the 17th Division to recover the lost trenches. An advance was begun across the open ground on the north side of The Bluff, combined with grenade attacks along the communication trenches, but the night was very dark, and the rain turned the ground into a quagmire, so that progress was difficult for the attacking troops who were unable to consolidate their position in the face of heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. After the failure of this attack it was decided to adopt slower and more effective methods. The situation, therefore, remained unchanged, when on February 18th the Battalion relieved the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment at Hill 60 on the right of the 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders.

Hill 60, which first came into prominence in April, 1915, soon became almost as well known throughout the British Expeditionary Force as Ypres itself. It was little more than a hill in name; the highest contour in the immediate locality it was marked 60 upon the map, hence the title.

Someone has described the position of Ypres as lying in the centre of a saucer with as the rim the German positions on the ridges almost encircling it. Hill 60 was a point on the saucer's rim a little to the south-east of Ypres, and somewhere about midway between Sanctuary Wood and The Bluff.

The main features of the surrounding ground were The Cutting, The Ravine, The Dump, and Verbranden Molen. The Cutting, through which ran the Ypres-Commines railway, was the main approach to the trenches, and in these winter months it became almost a water-course. Under constant threat of shelling, it was a place always approached with foreboding and passed with relief. A few more or less derelict dug-outs of the usual sand-bag and corrugated iron type congregated together towards the eastern end, and from these leading across The Cutting to near Battalion Headquarters and The Dump, was a covered way also constructed of sand-bags, etc., proof only against splinters and the almost incessant shrapnel. Around The Dump the ground was broken, affording cover for a support position. Here was also a deep dug-out in which, during the heavy fighting which followed the taking over of Hill 60 by the Battalion, the wounded were placed till it was possible to evacuate them. The Dump was formed from the earth excavated when The Cutting was made. The Ravine, a tiny valley, bi-sected the front line trenches running through these to a point in No Man's Land. Verbranden Molen, where once had stood a windmill, lay to the right

of The Dump and immediately behind the front line and, for some reason or other which was not apparent, escaped much of the shelling from which the other parts of the position suffered. On account of this fact in the Brigade Defence Scheme this area was laid down as that over which the front line would be reinforced in the event of necessity or for the advance of counter-attacking troops.

From Hill 60 the ground sloped gently away to the canal bank, Woodcote House, and Trois Rois.

After four days, during which Hill 60 maintained its normally bad reputation, the 9th Battalion took over the trenches, and the Battalion moved back into Brigade Reserve in new quarters at Blaupoort Farm, Bedford House, Swan Chateau, and some dug-outs in the grounds of the chateau near Kruisstraat. The weather was very cold, snow falling all day on the 22nd and again on the 23rd. During the tour of the trenches just concluded Captain P. Kirkup had commanded the Battalion, but on the 24th Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull returned from leave and reassumed command.

Although within fifteen hundred yards of the trenches, Bedford House was only partly destroyed, and contained some good underground rooms well furnished with the contents of the upper stories. Blaupoort Farm lay about twelve hundred yards east of Bedford House in the direction of Verbranden Molen. Swan Chateau stood much farther back from the line and to the west of Trois Rois, and was still partly furnished in spite of the needs of neighbouring units. The Battalion Transport Officer greatly regretted his inability to remove a large sideboard to his already luxurious hut at Dickebusch. A short distance away from Swan Chateau stood "Hush Hall," a large farmhouse occupied by gunners, the approach to which being partly under observation of the Germans bore a prominent notice inscribed "Hush Hall, we live here, you don't," as a deterrent to loiterers who might draw fire.

The next tour of the trenches, 37L to 47S, from February 26th till March 2nd, was marked by fighting on both sides which culminated in the re-capture of the eastern end of The Bluff by the 17th Division and the trenches to its north which the Germans had taken on February 14th. The attack of the 17th Division was originally intended to take place on the evening of March 1st, and the 50th Division was to demonstrate along its front from Sanctuary Wood to Hill 60, but owing to darkness and incessant rain, which made it impossible for the attacking troops to reach their assembly positions, the attack was postponed. The demonstration, however, was carried out. The wind made it impossible to use the smoke screen of grenades and candles, but the remainder of the programme was carried through between 5 and 5.45 p.m. Five minutes later the

German retaliation which had been very severe also ceased, and the situation again became normal for the rest of the evening. The following day the 17th Division was successful in a surprise attack at 4.30 a.m., the enemy being found with bayonets unfixed and many of them without their rifles or equipment. About fifty had taken refuge in the crater at the eastern end of The Bluff, and these put up a short fight before retreating into tunnels there which they had constructed, and in which they were captured at leisure. Apart from this there was little opposition on the right of the attack. The centre easily reached its assigned objective and captured the German third line which, however, being unsuitable for a permanent position, was only held long enough to cover the consolidation of the original trenches, and then evacuated at dusk without molestation. On the left the attack at first failed to reach the German trenches, but the right flank on reaching its objective so enfiladed the German position with Lewis gun-fire that the resistance on the left was overcome and that flank established. A further demonstration on similar lines to that of the previous day was carried out by the 50th Division during the progress of the attack. The British Artillery fire was apparently very effective; there was very little enemy rifle-fire, and only two or three machine-guns opened out. The German Artillery fire was much heavier than on the evening before especially on Trenches 40, 41, 38s, and 39s, several lengths of Trench 41 being blown in, thus temporarily isolating part. The greatest praise is due to Lieutenant F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson and his bombers for their excellent work and the manner in which they held this position under such difficult conditions. All communications with the Companies were cut, every effort was made to re-establish them, and eventually the Battalion Signallers were successful, the linesmen being especially deserving of credit.

The enemy barrage extended from the Sunken Road Dug-outs to Square Wood so far as could be seen, and was practically continuous till 8 a.m. when there came the news that the attack had proved successful. Five officers and two hundred and fifty-one other ranks passed Blaupoort Farm as prisoners.

During the attack communication completely broke down between the 9th Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment (attacking on the immediate right of the 8th Battalion) and its Brigade Headquarters. All messages had to be carried by runners through the 8th Battalion sector and to Headquarters of the 151st Infantry Brigade. In this Privates Jamfrey and Evans did especially good work, the former being eventually awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his gallantry.

Up to 10 a.m. the casualties in the Battalion amounted to Second-Lieutenant G. Atkinson, who was buried under a large breach

in the parapet but, fortunately, released, and found only to be suffering from shock (he was killed later in the war), and 10 other ranks killed, 13 wounded.

At 11 a.m. the enemy artillery fire increased and became intense. About noon two platoons of the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) who were in support at the Sunken Road Dug-outs near The Dump, were ordered forward to the assistance of the 9th Duke of Wellington's, and actually succeeded in reaching them without a casualty. The place of these two platoons in the Sunken Road was taken by a Company of the 5th Battalion Border Regiment.

At 2 p.m., as A Company had suffered considerable casualties, a reinforcement was sent up to it from the 9th Battalion Platoon at The Dump. About the same time a message was received from the 56th Infantry Brigade, 17th Division, to the effect that they had held the trenches gained, and although the enemy had attempted several counter-attacks, they had all failed.

At 3.50 p.m. the 9th Battalion Duke of Wellington's Regiment asked for the Company of the 5th Battalion Border Regiment in the Sunken Road to be sent to their assistance.

The Germans continued to shell both sides of the railway cutting, but later in the afternoon slackened down to the rate of about one heavy shell every three minutes between The Dump and The Cutting, with occasional bursts of shrapnel over The Cutting itself.

At night the Battalion was relieved by the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and returned to Dickebusch Huts, arriving there at 1.15 a.m. on the 3rd. The total casualties for the day amounted to 17 killed, 32 wounded.

Till March 14th the Battalion remained in Divisional Reserve at Dickebusch. During this "rest" a number of non-commissioned officers and men serving on Territorial engagements which had now expired became due for discharge. Compulsory service was not yet in force, and though a number of these re-engaged thereby becoming entitled to a month's leave, several refused and proceeded to England for discharge.

On March 14th the Battalion returned to the line, relieving the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in Trenches 37L to 40 inclusive at Hill 60. These were still in a bad state of repair owing to the constant shelling, especially the support line. After four days here the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.), 150th Infantry Brigade, took over on the night of the 18th, and the Battalion moved to billets in the hop factory adjoining the railway station at Poperinghe, part of the journey, from the Gold Fish Chateau midway between Ypres and Vlamertinghe, being made by train.

A new part of the sector was taken over on March 23rd, The

Bluff Support position (Kingsway Dug-outs, Redoubt 10, and Gordon Terrace) from the 2nd Battalion The Suffolk Regiment.

The Bluff, the scene of the recent hard fighting, was an artificial mound some thirty to forty feet high and about three hundred yards long, running east and west along the north bank of the Ypres-Commines Canal, and was formed of the spoil excavated when the canal was constructed. Opposite to it on the south bank of the canal was a similar, though smaller, mound known as Spoil Bank, immediately south of which lay St. Eloi. The front line trenches ran north and south across the eastern end of The Bluff, and included the huge, evil-smelling, water-filled crater formed by the mine blown by the Germans in February.

The surface of The Bluff, once covered with trees, now with the exception of a few at the western end reduced to mere splintered and discoloured stumps a few feet high, was torn and pitted by shell-fire, and seamed with roughly dug trenches. Here and there amongst the tangle of undergrowth were still to be found bodies of the fallen, whilst on the highest point, a few yards from the edge of the crater, was to be seen the crouching figure of a man of the Lancashire Fusiliers, one hand on the earth in front of him, the other holding his rifle, and with his eyes still steadfastly fixed ahead just as he had faced the enemy when death came to him. In the words of Brigadier-General Shea, "He was a fine example to all of a man doing his duty." It was impossible to reach him till after dark as he was in full view of the Germans.

By far the most terrible signs of the destruction wrought by the explosion of the mine and the subsequent bombardments were to be found around the north-eastern corner of The Bluff and between Hedge Street and The Bean. Here the fallen in dug-outs were still being cleared of their dead and from a tunnel dug deep into the side of The Bluff there was taken the whole of a machine-gun team buried there with their gun by the closing of the entrance and the falling roof.

On January 20th the Germans blew a mine in front of The Bluff. The second mine was fired on the 14th February, when the Germans attacked the position and succeeded in gaining a lodgement which they held until the attack of March 2nd, when not only the lost trenches were regained, but the German salient opposite Trench 31, and now called "The Bean," was captured.

From the support position the Battalion moved into the front line on March 26th, taking over Trench 31, Royal Engineer dug-outs near Gordon Post, The Loop and its support, Gordon Post, The Bean, The Crater, and New Year Trench, from the 6th Battalion.

At 4.17 a.m. on the 27th, six mines were exploded under the German trenches at The Mound, St. Eloi. These went up almost

simultaneously, and as it was not yet daylight, the flames of the explosions were very vivid. The huge masses of shattered earth thrown to a great height showed clearly against the faint dawn in the sky. There followed but a moment's silence, and then the guns on both sides broke out, the Germans being but a few seconds behind the British. Thirty seconds after the explosions the attack of the 3rd Division was launched. Two Battalions led the assault, a Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers on the right, and the 7th Battalion King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry on the left. The Royal Fusiliers seized and occupied two lines of German trenches, whilst the Shropshires captured part of the enemy second line and the ground along the front of the craters. The new line was then connected up on either flank with the original line. For a time there was a gap between the centre flanks of the two Battalions actually occupied by Germans, who from it entered one of the craters, but these, 5 officers and 85 other ranks, eventually surrendered. Early in the morning 5 officers and 195 other ranks had been taken, this making a total for the attack of 10 officers and 280 other ranks in prisoners.

From The Bluff very little could be seen though the distance was only a few hundred yards, but aeroplane photographs showed four very large craters, and The Mound had quite disappeared. The mines were laid at a very deep level, and consequently the craters formed were very deep and their lips proportionately high. The result of the operation was to deprive the Germans of a useful point of observation on the country towards Ypres.

There was no demonstration on the 50th Division front which was not shelled very heavily, although Kingsway Dug-outs and Chester Farm suffered somewhat. Second-Lieutenant W. Lawson was killed by a sniper whilst trying to rescue a man buried under a fall of the parapet in The Loop. After midday the situation settled down, though the artillery fire around St. Eloi still continued very heavy.

The 28th passed normally till evening, when about 7.45, a camouflet was blown between two of the Battalion bombing posts on the far edge of The Crater, partly burying the garrisons. Lance-Corporal S. Aberdeen, who was thrown by the force of the explosion into The Crater, worked indefatigably digging out his men; the relieving garrisons were just coming in at the time and assisted in this. The remainder of the night was quiet.

On March 30th the 6th Battalion again took over the front line, and the Battalion reoccupied the support position, one Company this time moving into Chester Farm as Kingsway was subject to shelling. The following day was quiet, but on April 1st Gordon Terrace was badly shelled, several dug-outs, including the Battalion

orderly-room, were destroyed, and in consequence the men were moved nearer to the front line and into some old trenches between Kingsway and Chester Farm. The shelling continued on the 2nd, when Kingsway was so heavily shelled that D Company had to move out of these dug-outs and lie down in the open. Brigade Headquarters in Gordon Terrace was practically destroyed with casualties of about a third of its personnel. Captain J. G. Harter, the Brigade-Major, who was wounded, died shortly afterwards, and Corporal Mansell of the Battalion, who was employed at the moment the bombardment opened in completing some graves in front of the Brigade Dug-outs, was also wounded and subsequently died.

An incident reminiscent of Barnsfather befell Captain W. Johnson, commanding D Company, for whilst the shelling was at its height a runner from Battalion Headquarters turned up, having braved the strafe to deliver a message asking how many pairs of gum boots were in possession of the Company. Another from the 6th Battalion also arrived at Brigade Headquarters with a message reporting the situation normal in the front line. If nothing else it showed the high sense of duty these men possessed; this was, however, a striking feature of all the runners in the Battalions of the Brigade.

The casualties in the Battalion amounted to 5 killed, 15 wounded, and 2 missing.

At night the 1st Canadian Infantry Brigade took over the sector, their 3rd Battalion relieving the support position, and the Battalion thereupon moved into Canada Huts near Ouderdom, a few fields away from its old home at Dickebusch which now passed to the Canadians.

It was a difficult relief; there was a dense fog. Kingsway and around Lankhof chateau were being shelled, and the relieving Canadians had to be taken by the guides across country from Bedford House with only the sound of a Belgian Battery of 75's firing from the Voormezele side of the canal and the faint glimmer of the Véry lights from the front line to give direction. Never was The Bluff such a pleasing sight as when, after long groping in the dark, wandering round an orchard till the leading files ran into the rear, its bulk loomed up and all was well. Dawn had broken when the last to be relieved trudged their way wearily along the roads towards camp. The transport had, too, a long and trying wait just short of Lankhof chateau picking up stores.

CHAPTER VII

VIERSTRAAT. MONT DES CATS

ON April 5th a new sector was taken over, that of Vierstraat on the right of the St. Eloi Craters which were now held by the French-Canadians. The Battalion moved up into the Brigade reserve position in Ridgewood, relieving there the 19th Canadian Battalion.

Though only a little over two thousand yards from the front line trenches much freedom was possible in Ridgewood, for it was but seldom shelled and its trees afforded ample cover from observation. The dug-outs, though lightly constructed, were comfortable and clean, and the Y.M.C.A. had even established a canteen in a large dug-out in the centre of the wood. After three peaceful days here, on April 8th the 9th Battalion was relieved in the front line in Trenches M₁ to N₂ inclusive. The line was held by three Companies whilst the fourth Company, together with Battalion Headquarters, occupied the Vierstraat defences which ran along a line midway between Ridgewood and Bois Carre. From these defences two communication trenches served the front line, Chicory Lane and P. and O., this latter, however, being reserved almost entirely for the sector on the left (St. Eloi Craters). The trenches were of a light breastwork type and did not appear to have been shelled recently. Now, however, shelling of the whole position became the daily rule probably as the result of the recent attack at St. Eloi and the unsettled conditions still existing in that sector.

The M and N Trenches ran north and south along the slopes below Wytschaete, its ruined hospice being a very prominent feature on the right, whilst immediately in front lay the Grand Bois and Bois Quarante. Behind the trenches the ground sloped gradually away to Dickebusch and its lake, Hallebast Corner, Mille Kruis and the village of La Clytte and was more or less still under cultivation, several large farms still being occupied by civilians. Up to within a few hundred yards of Vierstraat a farmer and a girl worked in the fields and caused considerable amusement by the careful filling in

daily of each new shell-hole as it appeared. They were kept fairly busy.

The Battalion spent two tours in the line here, and then on the evening of April 22nd was relieved by the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots and proceeded to La Clytte, where on the following day it was again relieved by the 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers and marched to the rest area on and around the Mont des Cats, being billeted in farms.

Mont des Cats was the most prominent of the chain of hills extending from Cassel in the west to Kemmel in the east, a feature of these hills being the line of windmills crowning each. On the highest point of the Mont des Cats stood a Trappist Monastery, part of which was converted to the uses of a British Hospital. Only the elderly monks remained, the younger men having been recalled to their regiments on the outbreak of war. In their coarse brown habits tied at the waist with cord, their shaven heads, and with sandalled feet, like figures out of the Middle Ages, they formed a picturesque sight as they passed out of the Monastery gate and filed down the road to work in the fields, each bearing an ancient implement. Forbidden to converse by the rules of their Order they moved in silence, seeming entirely oblivious to their surroundings and the curious gaze and remarks of the men who watched them pass. The Principal, however, was always willing to enter into conversation, discussing the war and things in general. He showed where the Kaiser's nephew, the Prince of Hesse, had been buried in the Monastery garden just inside the great gate, until his body was handed over to the Germans, and explained the curious feature of the Monastery clock which chimed the hour both at the stroke of the hour and again at the half-hour; for instance at three o'clock it chimed three strokes and at three-thirty it repeated this and so on every hour and half-hour throughout the twenty-four hours. His explanation was that this custom had originated many years ago when during the various devotional services the probationers amongst the monks, not yet fully able to concentrate on their act of worship, often fell asleep. One of the elder brethren therefore moved about amongst them, and as the clock chimed questioned any brother whom he suspected of having slept as to the time: if the brother thus interrogated had allowed himself to fall asleep he could not be altogether certain as to whether it was the hour or the half and if he guessed wrongly was awarded some penance to perform. The outside walls bore many signs of the fighting of 1914 in the marks of shells, rifle and machine-gun bullets on the south and west sides. From the hill itself a very extensive view of the Flanders Plain was possible. On a clear day the column on the hill above Boulogne was visible, and it was even said that the surf on the Belgian coast could be seen. Far in the north-west were the dim

spires of Bruges and Ostend, whilst the whole of "The Salient" lay like a map before one, with the huge shells bursting in the dead city of Ypres and the smoke of shrapnel floating like small clouds above it. From north to south could be traced the British line, Ypres, Armentières with the chimneys of Lille beyond, the Tower Bridge of Loos, and in the far distance the Vimy Ridge. At the foot of the hill lay the villages of Boeschepe, Berthen, Godewaersvelde, and three miles away Bailleul.

It may possibly have been due to the contrast with the Salient and its approaches that the country around Mont des Cats appeared so very beautiful in this spring of 1916. After dusk the nightingales, the myriad glow-worms in the hedge-rows, and the dim lamplight in the windows of the tiny cottages nestling on the hillside made it seem a veritable fairyland.

The farms occupied by the Battalion lay on the south side of the "Mont" in the direction of Meteren and at one of these, Noote Boom, the transport were very well cared for by Monsieur and Madame Devos and Marie their daughter who, with her broken English patter, was a great favourite. All who knew them will regret the chance of war which in April, 1918, brought their farm into the fighting zone and it was badly damaged by shell-fire and rendered untenable.

On April 28th the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, visited the Brigade and inspected the Battalions. After the inspection as he was leaving he espied the Brigade Church of England Chaplain, Captain Astbury, and stopped to speak to him, concluding his short conversation with the remark, "Well, I suppose you know what to preach about," adding, "Not too much peace about it, mind."

On the 30th there were fears that the rest would be interrupted, for a gas attack took place on the 3rd Division front (St. Eloi-Kemmel) and the 24th Division front (Kemmel-Ploegsteert), and at 2.15 a.m. orders were received to "stand by"; fortunately this was cancelled at 8.30 the same morning.

As the weather continued fine training, mostly in attack practices, and recreation proceeded uninterruptedly.

On May 16th Brigadier-General Shea, having been appointed to the command of the 30th Division, said farewell to his "Tigers," as he had affectionately christened the men of his Brigade, a name they were proud of. They, in their turn, spoke of him as "Jimmy Shea," a sure sign of regard for their Brigade Commander who was, to quote the words of Frederick Coleman, a correspondent, in his book "From Mons to Ypres," "of the salt of the earth." A story is related that on one occasion a man who was proceeding up a communication trench in the dark was halted by a sentry with the usual challenge to which he replied, "One of Jimmy Shea's — tigers!"

On May 17th Brigadier-General P. T. Westmorland took over command of the Brigade.

On the 18th Major Campbell gave his well-known lecture on "Bayonet Fighting" to the Brigade. Amongst the many stories told by him will be recalled that of the fat German who would probably be found in a captured trench with his hands up and crying, "Kamerad, Kamerad, I haf a vife and fife children." "He is a dangerous man," said Major Campbell. "Kill him, or he will probably go home and have five more."

A Divisional parade was held at Fletre on the 23rd when General Sir H. Plumer presented Distinguished Conduct Medals to Company Sergeant-Major Booth, Sergeant A. Beckwith, Sergeant A. Rutter, Private F. Jamfrej and Private J. Arnold, after which the whole Division marched past.

All good things come to an end, and on May 28th the Battalion returned to La Clytte, taking over Durham Camp from the 2nd Royal Scots. And now for the first time a Battalion mess was established and this was continued, whenever circumstances allowed, until the end. At La Clytte the Battalion remained in Divisional reserve until the evening of June 2nd when the M and N Trenches of the Vierstraat sector were taken over from the 5th Border Regiment and acquaintance renewed with the "rum jars," which appeared to be the enemy's favourite weapon in this part of the line. A "dud" which was opened by the Brigade bombing officer, Lieutenant Aubin, was found to contain a dark red substance resembling sawdust, embedded in which were a number of tins of bully beef. Owing to their erratic flight it was very difficult to judge accurately where a rum jar would eventually arrive, but their somewhat leisurely progression did give time for reflection on that point.

On June 3rd came the great attack on the Canadians holding Sanctuary Wood, in which the Germans captured the whole front line from Mount Sorrel to Trench B4. Some idea of the depth to which they penetrated will be gathered by those who knew this sector from the fact that the troops counter-attacking assembled just east of Zillebeke. A great deal of concern was felt regarding the safety of Major G. A. Stevens who had been appointed a short time previously Brigade-Major of the Canadian Infantry Brigade which was in the line at the time of the attack. Anxiety was allayed, however, by the Headquarters of the 151st Infantry Brigade, who ascertained from the Canadian Division that although the Brigade Commander was in the trenches and his fate was uncertain he had not taken Major Stevens with him.

In the King's Birthday Honours' List received on June 3rd, Captain P. Kirkup was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry on

many occasions during the preceding months, thus adding another to the already long list of Honours gained by the Battalion.

On the evening of June 8th the Battalion moved back into Brigade support in Ridgewood, being relieved by the 5th Border Regiment, and the days were spent in work on the Vierstraat defences. Whilst here the Germans blew a small mine at Hollandschesheur Farm, a salient in their position opposite to the M Trenches. This did considerable damage to their own trenches, but none to the M's. On the return of the Battalion to the front line on the 15th Second-Lieutenant W. G. Russell and two men went out to examine the crater, and reported sounds of work in it. The days passed uneventfully with the usual ration of rum jars, and artillery fire on both sides, which included the "Kommel Bus," a big shell from a 15-inch howitzer, near to Brulooze, until the 20th when the 5th Border Regiment again relieved the Battalion, which moved back to La Clytte.

During the six days spent at La Clytte the Companies in turn visited the flying ground at Bailleul. There was much excitement on the 22nd when a German aeroplane was brought down on the road running past the camp.

The last tour in the Vierstraat trenches commenced on the evening of the 26th. Unfortunately during this period, though the shelling was insignificant, rum jars and fish tail bombs inflicted casualties to the extent of four killed and five other ranks wounded. On the night of July 13th a raiding party of three officers and forty other ranks attempted to reach the enemy's lines at Hollandschesheur Farm but were unable to gain an entrance and returned with only one casualty. There were, however, very heavy casualties amongst the electric torches, watches and knives loaned from the Brigade for the purposes of this raid.

On the 15th the 151st Infantry Brigade was relieved by the 149th and the Battalion moved into a bivouac at Brulooze.

Since July 1st almost the main topic of discussion had been the Battle of the Somme, and the daily communiques and newspapers were eagerly looked for. There were many rumours and there was much speculation as to whether and when the 50th Division would be sent south to take part in the fighting. This was not to be for some weeks yet, and on July 19th the Battalion moved into the Kemmel sector, part of which it had held just a year previously. The first move was only as far as Kemmel Shelters, relieving here the 5th Border Regiment. The 151st Infantry Brigade took over the front from D5 Trench to the Kemmel-Wytschaete road on the right of the 150th Infantry Brigade.

To those who had previously been in this sector several changes were apparent. Kemmel Village was little changed, a few more

houses had been destroyed, one of which bore the pathetic notice, still visible on its shattered front, "Please do not take anything away from this house." The Hôtel de Petit Ypres was closed and no civilians remained anywhere. The chateau, which in 1915 had been Brigade Headquarters, was still unharmed save for the marks of shrapnel on its walls and more broken windows, but "Rupert" the swan was missing from the moat, having fallen a victim to shrapnel a short time before. The old Battalion Headquarters at Lindenhoeck was but a heap of bricks, but they were again fortunate and now occupied "Doctor's House," a comfortable furnished villa close to the entrance of the "Via Gellia" communication trench leading from the Kemmel-Wytschaete road and a hundred yards or so from the chateau which provided a billet for three Companies.

On July 22nd the G Trenches were taken over. Only four days were spent in these, but unfortunately Second-Lieutenant Pybus, who had only joined the Battalion on July 10th, was killed by a shell, and Private G. Hall, a stretcher-bearer, was also killed whilst gallantly attempting to dress the wounds of Second-Lieutenant Pybus.

After relief on the 26th the Battalion proceeded to Wakefield Huts, Locre. Here Captain C. Lomax, who for many years had been Church of England Chaplain to the Battalion, joined from England, having been posted to the 151st Infantry Brigade, and held his first church parade on July 30th.

The largest draft so far received by the Battalion, 325 other ranks, arrived from England on the 31st, a sure sign of fighting to come.

On August 1st the Kemmel trenches were taken over for the last time before the move south to the Somme. Owing to increased shelling and trench mortaring most of the garrison were withdrawn during the day-time, only isolated posts being retained in the front line.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

ON August 8th the 50th Division was relieved by the 19th Division, recently withdrawn from the Battle of the Somme. The Battalion handed over its trenches to the 7th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, and after spending the night at Badajos Huts, Locre, marched to the Mont des Cats area, occupying there the same billets as in the previous May.

The move south of the Division began on August 10th, and at 8 a.m. the following day, the Battalion entrained at Godewaersvelde for Candas, some twenty miles north of Albert, and from Candas marched a distance of seven miles to Prouville, where the civilians were greatly interested in the Battalion, for it was the first occasion on which British troops had been billeted in the village; in consequence of which "living" was cheap, for the estaminets retailed a very excellent cognac at ten centimes (1d.) a glass until the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, with more experience, put them in the way of making money out of Tommy, and the price was raised to thirty centimes. The Acting Quartermaster, however, came to the rescue, and visited each estaminet, objecting, with the result that the 8th Battalion continued to be served at ten centimes, whilst all others had to pay the higher rate.

Picardy, with its pleasant country roads, most of which were bordered by fruit-bearing trees, its picturesque villages with their cottages of many colours, its streams and downlands, was a great change from the Flanders in which the last fourteen months had been spent.

At 4 a.m. on August 15th, starting at this early hour to escape the heat of the day, the Battalion moved out of Prouville, and passing through Ribeaucourt, Domart-en-Ponthieu, and Bertaucourt reached Vignacourt, with its two-mile-long village street, at 9.30 a.m. From here could be seen the distant spire of the Cathedral of Amiens, and after all were settled into their billets leave was given to visit Amiens in one of the motor-lorries attached to the Battalion for the

carrying of heavy baggage. On the 16th the march was continued through Flesselles to Villers Bocage, and again on the 17th by Montigny to Baisieux where, in a wood, about three-quarters of a mile west of the village, a bivouac camp was formed. Baisieux, which bore many signs of the great number of troops which had passed through it since July 1st, was in a very dirty and dilapidated condition, and in fine weather the bivouac in the wood was if anything preferable, though, owing to the very small supply of tents available for the Brigade, of which, due to the foresight and promptness of the Acting Quartermaster, Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant H. Wilkinson, the Battalion obtained more than were actually allotted to it, the shelters were mainly composed of brushwood and holes dug in the sides of banks. Training now commenced on the lines of the lessons learnt during the early stages of the Somme Battle, but, unfortunately, the weather completely broke up, very heavy rain continuing day after day right up to the end of the month, by which time the conditions in Baisieux Wood became so bad that billets were eventually found for part of the Battalion in the village, and drying rooms established.

On August 28th it had been intended to hold a Divisional Parade at which Lieutenant-General Sir W. P. Pulteney, commanding the 3rd Corps, was to have presented medals, but the incessant rain caused its cancellation. However, Sergeant G. Anderson was presented with the riband of the Distinguished Conduct Medal at a special parade at Divisional Headquarters.

At the beginning of September the weather improved, and intensive training was carried out until the 10th, when the Brigade moved forward into the fighting zone through Henencourt, Millencourt, and Albert, to bivouacs in Becourt Wood. Through Albert the way lay by the Pilgrimage Church of Notre Dame de Brebieres with its massive figure of the Virgin Mary, dislodged by a shell from its upright position on the tower, leaning out over the narrow street below with the Child in her outstretched arms as though holding Him thus that all might see who passed by. Albert was still shelled daily, although the Germans by this time had been driven back some miles from the town. The Grande Place and its surrounding streets were in ruins, but the outskirts of the town, even on the enemy side, were very little damaged, and were still occupied by civilians, whilst shops and estaminets were still open here and there. Probably owing to a dense fog there was no shelling whilst the Battalion marched through, and Becourt was reached without incident. The road from Albert to Becourt having been behind the old British line, on the 1st of July there were few signs of the tremendous fighting of the previous two months to be seen until Becourt was reached and the

captured German positions came into view. Close to Becourt was the huge mine crater of La Boisselle, where the 34th Division with its Tyneside Brigades attacked on July 1st, with "Sausage Valley" beyond and Ovillers-Boisselle on the high ground to the north from which the German machine-guns had fired with such deadly effect on that day.

Unsurpassed in its tragedy of destruction by anything save the Ypres Salient, no words can describe the Somme; only in the memories of those who passed through can it be truly pictured.

The most amazing feature of the area immediately around Becourt was the scarcely damaged chateau standing close by the original British front line, and now used as a dressing-station. In amongst the graves now filling its old-time gardens were pitched of necessity the bivouacs of many of the men.

The next three days were spent at Becourt in organizing for the coming operations, and on September 14th orders were received for the 50th Division to attack on the following morning on a front between High Wood and the village of Martinpuich with the 149th Infantry Brigade on the right, the 150th Infantry Brigade on the left, and the 151st Infantry Brigade in reserve.

In this attack the Division was to have the use of an entirely new weapon, the Tank, which was now to be tried in action for the first time. Two of these were allotted to the Division and moved up into position during the night of the 14/15th September. In view of the later developments in the use of Tanks it may be of some interest to give here the first orders as to their action. These were included in the operation orders issued to all troops taking part in the attack.

ORDERS TO TANKS

(A) From the Starting Point at zero—33 minutes on the 15th they will advance due North in Column of Route, and halt at M32 d 7·0 and S2 b 7·7½, to arrive here 5 minutes before the Infantry. A lane will be kept in the Artillery Barrage for them to pass through. From these first positions they will move on at 49 minutes so as to arrive astride the Road at M32 d 7·7, three minutes before the Infantry. From this point the direction will be 30 E. of N. Tanks will start at 1 hour 41 minutes and halt just short of the Cutting about M33 a 1·4. As soon as the Infantry are well established in Final Objective Tanks will reverse and go back to Starting Point by same route.

(B) Signals. From Tank to Infantry and Aircraft.

Red Flag—Out of Action.

Green Flag—Am on Objective.

Other Flags are inter-Tank Signals.

Lamp Signals.

Series of T's—Out of Action.

Series of H's—Am on Objective.

Tanks will carry Pigeons.

(C) In the event of a Tank being left behind and having to follow Infantry who have passed on, arrangements must be made as far as possible to ensure a party of two or three men being left by the Infantry to guide Tank up to next Objective and remove wounded from its path.

(D) Infantry must not wait for any Tanks delayed.

The final preparations made, the Battalion at 7 p.m. moved up to The Quadrangle on the northern side of Mametz Wood, the quartermaster's stores and transport lines being established near to Meaulte. The Quadrangle, so called from its formation, was a system of trenches which had been captured in the August, and lay between Mametz Wood and Contalmaison on a spur with a small valley, Shelter Valley, running round its western slopes, deep with steep sides, affording good positions for howitzer batteries; here there was also a large prisoners' cage. From Becourt the road ran through the utterly destroyed villages of Fricourt and Mametz, but the Battalion followed a shorter cross-country route via the Contalmaison Road thence by Lozenge Wood and across Shelter Valley.

The new system of organization for attack was as follows: Each Company was organized with 4 scouts, 3 snipers and observers, 4 signallers, 1 squad Company bombers, and 1 Lewis gun team in addition to the rifle sections. Headquarters Company consisted of 2 Lewis gun detachments, 2 squads Battalion bombers, Headquarters signallers, 4 observers, runners, and regimental police. Only a proportion of officers, 22 in all, were taken into action, the remainder consisting of the Battalion Second-in-Command, each Company Lewis gun officer with his assistant, the Assistant Intelligence officer and several subalterns together with the Regimental Sergeant-Major, all Company Quartermaster-Sergeants, 1 Sergeant from each Company, 4 reserve Lewis gun teams (without guns), and 2 squads of Battalion bombers were left behind at the transport lines to form a nucleus for the reorganization of the Battalion when withdrawn from action.

During the three weeks previous to the move up into the fighting zone, Lieutenant R. A. Worswick, with forty-five other ranks, had been trained as a carrying party for the purpose of carrying munitions and rations from the Brigade dump to the troops in action. This party was stationed at the Brigade dump. A second party of one officer and twenty other ranks was stationed in Shelter Valley as an

escort for German prisoners during the time the Brigade was in reserve.

On September 15th the 50th Division began its first attack in the Somme Battle at 6.20 a.m., and the Battalion moved forward into the old German line running northwards from Bazentin-le-Petit and its wood, relieving here the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) which thereupon moved farther forward. At 7.30 a.m. news was received that so far the attack had been successful and the first objective gained. At 9.25 a.m. the Battalion was placed at the disposal of the G.O.C. 150th Infantry Brigade which formed the left of the Divisional attack, and two Companies, C and D, were ordered forward to Eye and Swansea Trenches respectively, where they came under the orders of Lieutenant-Colonel G. O. Spence, commanding the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.)

The War Diary only spares the two words "moved forward" for the passing of C and D Companies from the comparative security of the old German line. They made their way past the skeleton trees of Bazentin Wood, through countless shell-holes, tangles of barbed wire, and in and out of shapeless crumbling trenches over the skyline into the shallow valley beyond which lay the positions of the 150th Infantry Brigade marked by clouds of heavy black shrapnel and fountains of earth thrown up by high explosive shells. In crossing the valley the Companies came under fire, for it was still being shelled though blindly by the Germans, whilst from High Wood, on the ridge closing the eastern end of the valley, which was still holding out against the attack of the 47th Division, came bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire. Down a short sunken length of what had once been a road they passed, where by an Aid Post was collected a pitiful group of wounded, then by Kerry Alley up into Eye and Swansea Trenches. These, however, were being so heavily shelled that shelter was taken in shell-holes in their rear.

By this time a large number of prisoners, estimated at 300, had passed the old German line. Some of these had been taken by the 15th Division which was attacking on the left of the 50th. The nervous condition of several of the prisoners, due, no doubt, to the terrific bombardment, was such that they were marching with their hands still raised above their heads just as they had surrendered.

The attack continued to progress favourably, but at High Wood the 47th Division was still held up, and the fire from the wood continued very heavy upon the Northumberland Fusiliers forming the right flank of the 50th Division in consequence. During the afternoon C Company was sent farther forward to reinforce a company of the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.), but on reaching it found that they were not required and returned.

At 3.30 p.m. the remainder of the Battalion was ordered up into Eye and Swansea Trenches to replace C and D Companies which were about to go forward; this order was, however, cancelled and only A Company sent.

The artillery fire of both sides was extremely heavy at this time, especially that of the Germans to the north of Martinpuich. About 9 p.m. A Company was ordered to withdraw to the old German line as there were too many troops in the forward zone, and it retired about midnight, having suffered casualties to the extent of 4 killed, 22 wounded, and 2 missing. An hour later C Company was also withdrawn to the old German line.

At 8 a.m. on the 16th the Battalion again came under the orders of its own Brigade, and soon after noon D Company rejoined.

In the evening the 151st Infantry Brigade relieved the 149th. A and B Companies moved forward into Clark's Trench and Eye Trench, in which each Company had two platoons. Here A Company came under the orders of the 6th Battalion, and B Company under the 9th Battalion, Battalion Headquarters with C and D Companies remaining in the old German line.

At 4.30 p.m. on the 17th Lieutenant F. V. Perrott, with six bombing squads, was ordered to attack "The Crescent," a semi-circular trench about midway between High Wood and Martinpuich, but met with a very heavy barrage, and by 5.30 p.m. the attack had been abandoned. At 8.30 p.m. a second attack was made with bombing squads, four of the 8th Battalion and two of the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, but this also met with a very heavy barrage, and both the Border squads and one of the 8th Battalion were cut up.

At 2 a.m. on the 18th Battalion Headquarters with C and D Companies moved forward into Clark's, Swansea, and Eye Trenches, and an attack was ordered to be made on Prue Trench, on the right of The Crescent running in the direction of High Wood, at 5.30 a.m., the order of battle being, A Company with about seventy men of the 9th Battalion on the right, B Company with about fifty of the 6th Battalion in the centre, and the 5th Battalion Border Regiment on the left. It was found impossible in the time to get the men into the assembly trenches and zero hour was, therefore, altered to 7.35 a.m. Unfortunately the order to this effect did not reach B Company which was then under the orders of the 6th Battalion, with the result that this Company, in torrential rain and under very heavy fire, attacked alone without any support whatsoever. Their losses in consequence were very heavy. Captain A. Oswell was wounded whilst leading his Company in the early stages of the attack, and Company Sergeant-Major Black, M.M., who attempted to rescue him, was killed in doing so. Sergeant Rutter, D.C.M., was killed, and Second-Lieutenant

J. P. Wallace, who was wounded, lay with others all day in No Man's Land till evening, when they were able to crawl back. At the same time a separate attack was again made on The Crescent by the remainder of the Battalion bombers, but this, like the attack on Prue Trench, failed through lack of support. In consequence the attack for 7.35 a.m. was cancelled, and during the morning A and D Companies relieved the 6th and 9th Battalions respectively, so that the whole of the 8th Battalion was now in the front line which consisted of a very wet narrow trench about five feet deep, and containing a large number of dead. The Battalion continued to hold this line, now the entire front of the 50th Division, throughout the 19th and 20th. Great difficulty was experienced in getting rations forward, and very little reached the front line.

On the evening of the 19th it was again decided to attempt to capture The Crescent with bombers, and if this attack proved successful to then bomb along Prue Trench or the Starfish Line. Owing to the unceasing rain the ground was in such a condition that the bombers were unable to reach the Sunken Road in time, and zero hour was postponed until 1 a.m. on the 20th, but even then, the mud being some three feet deep, it was impossible to reach The Crescent.

At night on the 20th the Brigade was relieved by the 149th, and after relief by the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers the Battalion moved back into shelters and dug-outs on the Mill Road near to Bazentin-le-Petit. Mill Road was a short length of unmetalled track running past a quarry in which Brigade Headquarters were established. The few dug-outs were merely lean-to shelters of corrugated iron and sand-bags against the bank on one side, and most of the accommodation consisted of shell-holes and a ditch all very wet, but the immediate area was free from shelling, though rather unpleasant in the vicinity of the quarry owing to frequent premature bursts from some gun firing from a position farther down the valley. However, the Field Kitchens were able to function here, which helped matters greatly. The 21st was spent in reorganization, and on the 22nd the Brigade becoming Divisional Reserve, the Battalion moved back into its old quarters in The Quadrangle, and then came the luxury of baths, the men being sent for these to Becourt.

In The Quadrangle the work of reorganization was continued, and in addition practically the whole Battalion was employed on repairs to the roads in the Corps area.

In the afternoon of the 24th the old German line was again occupied in relief of the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, the 151st Infantry Brigade being now in support for a Divisional attack to take place on the 25th. This began at 12.35 p.m., and on the 50th Division front was entirely successful. From the brief news

received the attack on the left of the Division did not appear to progress, but all went well with the New Zealand Division (14th and 15th Corps) on the right, a verbal message being received that the northern edge of Morval, Les Boeufs and Gueudecourt had been captured. During the attack the Battalion was held ready to move at fifteen minutes' notice; at 8 p.m. this was changed to half an hour.

Throughout the 26th the Battalion remained in the old German line, parties being engaged clearing the ground forward of Hook Trench of rifles, equipment, and in burying the dead.

At 2 a.m. on the 27th orders were received to relieve the 6th Battalion in the intermediate line and 6th Avenue East, and at 2.15 a.m., whilst this relief was being carried out, the 150th Infantry Brigade attacked the German trenches.

At 4 a.m. the Battalion moved forward again and relieved the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) in the left sub-sector of the Eaucourt l'Abbaye Trenches (Spence Trench, 26th Avenue and Crescent Alley).

On the two following days, 28th and 29th September, there was considerable shelling, but no further operations until the evening of the 29th, when an attack was ordered on the "Flers Line," a system of trenches running from the village of Flers to near Eaucourt l'Abbaye. The orders were received so late in the afternoon from the Brigade that it was 5 p.m. before the actual orders for the attack, which was timed for 5.55 p.m., reached the Companies. There was thus no time for making any detailed arrangements, and Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell, who was to lead with A Company, although he did all that was possible, was compelled to move forward into position at 5.50 p.m. without having been able to inform the other Companies supporting him of his plans.

From the Battalion trenches the ground rose slightly to the German position, and except across the open which was commanded by a ridge and the Butte de Warlencourt, both occupied by the enemy, the only line of advance was up the narrow communication trench, 26th Avenue, which was held by the Germans for some distance in front of their actual trenches. At zero hour Second-Lieutenant W. G. Russell with twenty-five men, followed by Second-Lieutenant Bewick with a similar party, bombed up 26th Avenue and entered the German front line. Here they proceeded to bomb their way along from bay to bay, one party to the right and the other to the left, followed by the remainder of A Company. Second-Lieutenant Bewick was wounded soon after the attack began, whilst standing fully exposed under very heavy fire upon one of the blocks erected by the Germans in the trench, and all control then centred upon Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell, as his brother was heavily engaged with his bombers on the right flank. The attack, however, continued

to progress successfully on both flanks, and the German front line was cleared, and the two small communication trenches leading to their support line were entered. Two platoons of D Company now came up to reinforce the position, C and B Companies following closely behind. A number of Germans were killed in this trench and in their dug-outs, only one prisoner being taken. At this moment the supply of bombs began to give out; every man of the rear Companies had passed forward the two he carried. All bandoliers had been collected, and the Lewis guns were working like fury covering the flanks.

The Germans who were holding the position resisted strenuously any further advance, and now began a series of counter-attacks which, however, were all beaten off with very heavy loss, they being caught time after time in the open with rifle and Lewis gun-fire. As he considered that if his men were more extended any further attacks would be more easily warded off, Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell endeavoured to effect this and extend his Company in line with the bombers. Some confusion resulted, and in remedying this he was wounded. Almost at the same time the Germans again advanced on the right over the open, but Second-Lieutenant W. G. Russell, with now only four of his bombers left, beat them off.

In spite of his wound Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell continued collecting men to assist his brother's party and was again wounded whilst exposing himself in order to ensure that they were not surprised. By this time all the Sergeants had become casualties, two of the Lewis guns were out of action, the third now apparently jammed, and the Stokes mortar was without shells. Feeling himself failing as the result of his wounds, Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell endeavoured to reach the two platoons of D Company in order to hand over command, but shortly after moving off he observed the men beginning to retire; these he halted and extended with the intention of rushing the Germans who had again attacked. Lieutenant R. H. Guest Williams had, however, grasped the situation, and having extended B Company, was now advancing over the open to the assistance of A Company. To him Second-Lieutenant G. R. Russell quickly explained the situation, and was wounded for the third time whilst doing so.

The Germans now advanced in overwhelming numbers from the direction of Le Sars, and also from a trench which was unlocated at the time, and at 7.30 p.m., when owing to the heavy barrage no reinforcements could reach the scene of the fighting except up the narrow communication trench with consequent fatal delay, Lieutenant Guest Williams reluctantly evacuated the position and fell back, taking up a new line in the open to the right and left of 26th Avenue

where the Germans were held whilst a double block was built and garrisoned when the Companies withdrew to their original trenches.

As was natural in such stubborn hand-to-hand fighting, the casualties were very heavy, amounting to fifty per cent. of those engaged, but the German losses must have exceeded this greatly, for their almost continuous counter-attacks over the open on no less than seven occasions were withered up under the rifle and Lewis gun-fire, those who survived this being accounted for by bayonets and bombs.

It is difficult and perhaps unfair where every man fought so well to make any mention of individuals, but the two brothers Second-Lieutenants G. R. and W. G. Russell, the latter unfortunately missing after the action, Second-Lieutenants Bewick, and Frost who died later from his wounds, Sergeant A. Affleck who made several raids on his own up the communication trench whilst the block was being built, and Private Millar of No. 4 Platoon were outstanding figures in the fighting. Sergeant A. Affleck was at the time perhaps the youngest sergeant in the 50th Division, being not yet eighteen years of age. The greatest credit is also due to Lieutenant R. H. Guest Williams for his quick appreciation of the situation, and his gallant though unsuccessful support of A and D Companies. Although wounded he continued to carry on until the withdrawal was completed, and together with Lieutenant A. R. Twigg, made a very gallant effort to find Second-Lieutenant W. G. Russell when he was found to be missing after the evacuation of the German position, searching up the communication trench until they met the Germans and had to give up, narrowly escaping capture during their return when passing trenches which had in the meantime been reoccupied by the Germans who, however, seemed so surprised that they allowed them to pass.

The following day, September 30th, passed without any further fighting, the Battalion remaining in position in readiness for the Divisional attack on October 1st.

At 3.15 p.m. on October 1st the new attack on the Flers line was launched by the 151st Infantry Brigade, with the 47th Division on the right and the 23rd on the left.

The centre of the attack was formed by the Battalion, and the 5th Battalion Border Regiment with the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the right, and the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (149th Infantry Brigade) on the left, this being necessary on account of the weakness owing to casualties of the two centre Battalions which were organized into a Composite Battalion for the attack. The 5th Battalion Border Regiment, as leading Battalion of the centre, assembled in North Durham Street and formed the first two waves; the 8th Battalion, forming the 3rd and 4th waves, assembled in South

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Durham Street, each Battalion on a three company frontage of one hundred yards per Company, and each Company on a two platoon front.

Soon after 4 a.m. the 8th Battalion moved up to its assembly position. This trench, South Durham Street, which should have been dug on the night 28/29th September, had not been completed, only one hundred and fifty yards of an average depth of between two and three feet being in existence, with the result that B Company under Captain A. N. Clark on the right, and half of C Company, under Lieutenant F. V. Perrott, were compelled to remain in 26th Avenue. B, C and D Companies were in this position at 7 a.m., A Company, only some forty strong, remaining near Battalion Headquarters in Crescent Alley, when the deliberate bombardment of the enemy trenches by the artillery began. As there appeared to be no troops on the left flank, Captain Clark went out in this direction to reconnoitre.

For a long time the Germans did not put up any considerable barrage, but at 9 a.m. their fire became more than normal, and the assembly trenches, Spence Trench, and Crescent Alley were shelled intermittently, a number of casualties resulting. During the morning the assembly position was considerably improved with the exception of its right, where it was a case of "sapping," and consequently very slow progress only was possible.

At 3.10 p.m. the Companies deployed into the open, B Company on the right, C Company in the centre, and D Company on the left. Five minutes later the advance was begun under cover of the artillery barrage, which proved magnificent, and enabled the advance to the enemy trenches to be made practically without a casualty. Lieutenant R. A. Worswick and Second-Lieutenant V. McLare were wounded, but the latter remained on duty for the next twelve hours.

The following report on the attack as seen from the air by Major J. Chaumier, commanding 34th Squadron, Royal Flying Corps, is of much interest:

"At 3.15 p.m. the steady bombardment changed into a most magnificent barrage. The timing of this was extremely good. Guns opened simultaneously, and the effect was that of many machine-guns opening fire at the same order. As seen from the air, the barrage appeared to be a most perfect wall of fire in which it was inconceivable that anything could live.

"The first troops to extend from the forming-up trenches appeared to be the 50th Division, who were seen to spread out from the sap heads, and forming up trenches and advance close up under the barrage, apparently some fifty yards away from it. They appeared

to capture their objective very rapidly and with practically no losses while crossing the open.

"The 23rd Division I did not see so much of owing to their being, at the moment of zero, at the tail end of the machine.

"The 47th Division took more looking for than the 50th, and it was my impression at the time that they were having some difficulty in getting into formation for attack from their forming-up places, with the result that they appeared to be very late and to be some distance behind the barrage when it lifted off the German line at Eaucourt l'Abbaye and immediately to the west of it. It was plain that here there was a good chance of failure, and this actually came about, for the men had hardly advanced a couple of hundred yards apparently, when they were seen to fall and take cover among shell-holes, being presumably held up by machine-gun and rifle fire. It was not possible to verify this owing to the extraordinary noise of the bursting shells of our barrage.

"The Tanks were obviously too far behind, owing to lack of covered approaches, to be able to take part in the original attack, but they were soon seen advancing on either side of the Eaucourt l'Abbaye—Flers line continuously in action and doing splendid work. They did not seem to be a target of much enemy fire.

"The enemy barrage appeared to open late, quite five minutes after the commencement of our own barrage, and when it came, bore no resemblance to the wall of fire which we were putting up. I should have described it as a heavy shelling of an area some three or four hundred yards in depth from our original jumping-off place.

"Some large shells were falling in Destremont Farm, but these were again too late to catch the first line of the attack, although they must have caused some losses to the supports.

"Thirty minutes after zero the first English patrols were seen entering Le Sars. They appeared to be meeting with little or no opposition, and at this time no German shells were falling in the village. Our own shells were falling in the northern half."

The barrage line began about fifty yards in front of the German trenches, and as it fell the waves of the attack advanced and followed closely behind it as it moved forward. On reaching the German wire it was found that this had only been badly cut by the shell-fire and, consequently, each wave in turn had to close up in order to pass through such gaps as were found. Both Battalions became mixed up as a result. Fortunately, the smoke of the bursting shells proved an excellent screen, and by 3.30 p.m. both objectives were captured. There were a few dead and wounded Germans in the trenches, but most had taken shelter in the deep dug-outs, and had to be forced

100 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

out. In all about twenty-five prisoners were taken. Contact with the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers on the left was obtained immediately, but not on the right with the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.), as this Battalion had great difficulty in getting over, and the few who reached the second objective were cleared out again by the Germans. The 6th and 9th Battalions, both now under Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. Bradford (Major Wilkinson commanding the 6th Battalion, having been wounded), continued the attack on the right, being reinforced by bombing squads from the 8th Battalion, and were eventually successful about 11.30 p.m.

A block was then established about one hundred and fifty yards down the communication trench leading forward from the captured position to a system of trenches known as "The Tangle" in which a patrol from the 5th Border Regiment had located a German listening post, but owing to the failure of the 6th and 9th Battalions, the right flank was consequently in the air, and this block had to be withdrawn to about fifteen yards in front of the second objective.

On the left the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers' patrols entered Le Sars and found positions held by snipers.

The captured trenches had a few dug-outs containing ordinary trench stores and blankets. The trenches themselves were merely earth, no sand-bags having been used in their construction even for the fire-steps.

Contact with the aeroplane was not very successful owing to the supply of ground flares not arriving in time for the attack, but the plane flew very low and the men waved their shovels and received acknowledgment.

During the night there was intermittent shelling which was intense at intervals, but no counter-attack took place.

On October 2nd, between 6 and 9 a.m., the situation was very quiet; afterwards the continuation of 26th Avenue which had not yet been dug through to the captured trenches was especially heavily shelled by field guns. Consolidation of the position was difficult and slow owing to heavy rain, but was continued all day until the evening when the Battalion was partially relieved by the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. The bad state of the trenches, together with the congested condition of the communication trenches, due to their use by the 23rd Division on the left, prolonged the relief until 9.30 a.m. on the 3rd, when the Companies were collected in Tyne and Boast Trenches. Here, hot food was served, a very welcome change from the bully and biscuit of the last few days, and at 3 p.m. on the 13th, the 13th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry belonging to the 23rd Division relieved the Battalion, which then returned to bivouac in Becourt Wood.

On October 4th, the whole of the 50th Division having now been relieved, the Battalion moved to Henencourt Wood in the rest area, west of Albert.

The camp in Henencourt Wood was in an excellent position and consisted of canvas huts and tents in which the whole Brigade was accommodated. Though the weather continued unsettled, the usual training was carried out after a day or two resting, but owing to the weak strength of the Battalion and the many working parties called for, it was in the main confined to practice on the rifle range.

During this rest a new scheme with the object of making the identification of units easier during an action (all numerals indicating the number of a Battalion had for some time now ceased to be worn, with a view to preventing the enemy obtaining information from casualties or prisoners as to what particular formations were opposed to them in the various parts of the front) was adopted. This, in the case of the 151st Infantry Brigade, consisted of diamond-shaped patches, a different colour for each Battalion, worn on the sleeve close to the shoulder, the colour in the case of the 8th Battalion being a dark blue. On October 9th the whole of the Battalion was fitted out with these.

On October 14th No. 6692, Private Thompson, was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry during the recent fighting, and the same day the Battalion moved forward into Mametz Wood for work on the roads between Contalmaison and Bazentin-le-Petit, remaining here until the 17th when the 5th Border took over this work and the Battalion returned once more to Henencourt Wood, where the following few days were spent in moving the huts from amongst the trees and re-erecting them in a drier and more open position on a terrace enclosed on three sides by the wood but open to the south.

After church parade on October 22nd, Brigadier-General N. J. G. Cameron, C.M.G., commanding the Brigade, presented Medal Ribbons to the following non-commissioned officers and men, each of whom had been awarded the Military Medal for gallantry: Sergeant A. Robinson, Sergeant T. Chrisp, Corporal S. Murray, Privates G. E. Meek, J. Burns, R. Morgan, W. Elliott, R. Atkinson, J. Armstrong and R. Clewes. Private G. Cooper, who had also been awarded this medal, was not present, having been wounded on October 2nd.

The Battalion now began to be made up to strength again, and a draft of 139 other ranks arrived from the base on October 2nd. These were "Derby" men and chiefly south-country. On the following day the 50th Division began its return to the fighting in relief of the 9th Division, and at 9.50 a.m. they marched off for Becourt, where on arrival the whole Brigade erected a tented camp on the

slopes of Sausage Valley a short distance in front of Becourt Wood. Here one of the new draft, in his anxiety to get a tent erected quickly, was found, after he had been at work for a short time, to be using as a mallet to drive in tent pegs a "dud" German shell. On being told by his startled comrades to stop, he exclaimed: "Will it go off?" The 24th was spent here, working parties being employed on road repairs. On the 25th the Brigade moved up into the Mametz Wood area, completing the relief of the 9th Division. The Battalion was fortunate in finding a standing tented camp in the area allotted to it close to The Quadrangle whilst the other Battalions were more or less "out in the blue," particularly the 9th Battalion, which found only a few old trenches and one canvas shelter. However, as soon as this was known the Battalion "closed up," and the tents thus made available were shared amongst the others; even then it was a tight fit to get all under cover, and in one case no less than 22 men managed to wedge themselves into a tent to sleep.

Eight days were spent here. At 4 a.m. on November 3rd the Battalion moved forward into the line, relieving the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in Snag Trench and its supports a short distance in advance of the Flers line, captured on October 1st, and not far from the Butte de Warlencourt. The trenches on the right were held by the 28th Australian Battalion and on the left by the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.). The trenches were nearly two feet deep in mud and without trench-boards. During the following day, November 4th, orders for an attack by the whole Brigade on the Gird Trench and its support line on the 5th were received, and the Companies moved back into the support position, leaving sentries only in the front line.

The Gird Trench ran east and west from the Albert-Bapaume road towards Gueudecourt. On the left lay the Butte de Warlencourt, a mound or tumulus some forty feet high, reputed to be an ancient burial-place similar to those found on Salisbury Plain. This, in September, when the Battalion first entered the Somme fighting, stood out from the surrounding country a green, conical-shaped hill. Of little or no strategic importance except that it provided observation of all the ground towards High Wood, Martinpuich and east of that village, it had been so battered by the daily shelling that all sign of vegetation had now disappeared and it stood a shapeless, pock-marked mass of chalk. Beyond the Gird line lay a stretch of undulating country with Bapaume clearly visible in the distance and midway, almost hidden in a small valley, Le Barque. The remainder of the attack frontage held no special feature except a considerable amount of dead ground to the rear of the objectives.

The Battalion, with a fighting strength of 14 officers, 480 other

ranks, formed the right of the Brigade attack with the Australians on its right flank, the 6th and 9th Battalions were in the centre and on the left respectively and the 5th Border was in Close support.

During the night of the 4/5th November the Companies moved up into their assembly positions in torrential rain and with the mud in parts reaching up to the thigh, B, C and D Companies into Snag Trench, A Company into Snag support temporarily, Battalion Headquarters being in Hexham Road where the 5th Border had two Companies, the other two Companies of this Battalion being between this road and the front line. All through the night both Hexham Road and the communication trench, Pioneer Alley, were very heavily shelled.

At 9.5 a.m. on the 5th the artillery barrage opened, and the Battalion entered upon its last fight in the Somme Battle of 1916. The barrage was poor, many shells falling short; indeed this was the case throughout the day so far as the "Heavies" were concerned in spite of the firing of signal lights and the efforts of the artillery liaison officer at Brigade Headquarters. The Australians appeared to suffer very heavily from their own artillery, which also caught C Company, their barrage actually falling about seventy yards behind their own front line, whilst their overhead machine-gun fire was striking the 8th Battalion parapet as well as their own. Their attack was consequently a failure on the immediate right.

The greatest difficulty was experienced in getting out of the trenches owing to the depth of the mud. The enemy barrage in front of Snag Trench was not intense, but machine-gun fire both from right and left was opened on the first wave as it left the trench, and men began falling at once, Captain A. N. Clark and Lieutenant W. Boyd both being wounded. The former remained urging his men on, but the latter was very badly wounded and though carried back died soon afterwards in the dressing-station at Seven Elms. Lieutenant Bannehr, who was with the first wave, was missing after the attack.

The ground of No Man's Land was very heavy, but what was left of the waves reached a point about thirty yards from Butte Trench, which was strongly held by the Germans. Here, owing to the intensity of the enemy fire and the shells of the British "Heavies" and the Stokes mortar battery which were falling short, one of which knocked out an entire Lewis gun section, it was found impossible to make further progress with the few men left, and eventually a withdrawal was ordered. It was impossible to remove the wounded who, with the remnants of the waves, lay out all day on the shell-holes in No Man's Land. The Germans did their utmost to try to get the wounded to crawl in to them when doubtlessly they would have finished them off, and Sergeant Braine, who was lying wounded in a

shell-hole near to the German line, saw them searching the shell-holes after dusk and being pretty free with the bayonet. In all, 5 officers and 120 other ranks succeeded in withdrawing to Snag Trench, the casualties including, in addition to those already mentioned, Lieutenants Hill, Banks, and M. H. Kay killed, and Lieutenant Tozer wounded; whilst among the many other ranks killed were Company Sergeant-Major A. Booth, D.C.M., Company Sergeant-Major Eli Cook, Sergeant A. Beckwith, Corporal J. Harland, Corporal J. Clarney, Corporal W. Bell, Lance-Corporal A. Birbeck, Private J. Blenkiron and Private W. Parlett.

In the centre the 6th Battalion met with indifferent success, their right suffering similarly to the 8th Battalion, but their left, together with the 9th Battalion, completely overwhelmed the enemy, the 9th Battalion capturing The Butte itself with the whole of its garrison (179th Infantry Regiment), but heavy counter-attacks which developed later resulted in a withdrawal in the evening to the original line. The casualties throughout the Brigade were exceedingly heavy. The 151st Trench Mortar Battery, which had moved up after the capture of The Butte into a quarry on its north-western edge, managed to save its guns, but machine-guns which had taken up forward positions on the Bapaume road were surrounded and captured with their crews.

So far as could be seen there was no sign of any attack to the west, and the operation appeared to be an entirely isolated affair, allowing the Germans to concentrate all their troops and guns on the defence of the position.

From The Butte, after its capture, it was possible to watch the assembling of the Germans for each counter-attack prior to its delivery, and it was only after several of these had been beaten off throughout the day that the defenders, so weak from losses and exhausted, unable to withstand the last towards evening, withdrew. A striking incident of the early stage of the attack was the solitary figure of a man of the 9th Battalion on the summit of The Butte where he paused for a moment and then passed down out of sight. A German in a drunken condition actually walked down the Bapaume road during the attack into the 9th Battalion. His sole expressed desire was to sleep, and he explained that there were young men in Germany who did not fight and that he had had enough of it.

In the evening, after the withdrawal, the 5th Border took over Snag Trench and the Battalion then moved back into close support, but was almost immediately relieved here by the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and moved farther back into the Flers line.

It had been intended to renew the attack with the 5th Border Regiment on the following morning, but owing to the development on the left and the withdrawal from The Butte this was postponed.



THE BUTTE DE WARFENCOURT

From a Sketch made by Rev. C. L. L. L. L. L.

The Crosses were erected in memory of those of the 9th and 10th Regts. who fell in the attack on the Butte on the 1st of July 1863.

shell-hole near to the German line, saw them searching the shell-holes after dusk and being pretty free with the bayonet. In all, 5 officers and 120 other ranks succeeded in withdrawing to Snag Trench, the casualties including, in addition to those already mentioned, Lieutenants Hill, Banks, and M. H. Kay killed, and Lieutenant Tozer wounded, whilst among the many other ranks killed were Company Sergeant-Major A. Booth, D.C.M., Company Sergeant-Major Eli Cook, Sergeant A. Beckwith, Corporal J. Harland, Corporal J. Clarncey, Corporal W. Bell, Lance-Corporal A. Birbeck, Private J. Blenkiron and Private W. Parlett.

In the centre the 6th Battalion met with indifferent success, their fight being very similarly to the 8th Battalion, but their left, together with the 7th Battalion, completely overwhelmed the enemy, the 6th Battalion capturing The Butte itself with the whole of its garrison (the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment), but heavy counter-attacks which developed during the night necessitated a withdrawal in the evening to the original line. The fighting throughout the Brigade were exceedingly heavy. The 1st Mortar Battery, which had moved up after the capture of the Butte into a quarry on its north-western edge, managed to hold its position, but machine-guns which had taken up forward positions along the same road were surrounded and captured with their crews. As could be seen there was no sign of any attack to the right, the operation appeared to be an entirely isolated affair, and the Germans to concentrate all their troops and guns on the Butte position.

The Butte, after its capture, it was possible to watch the movements of the Germans for each counter-attack prior to its delivery. Several of these had been beaten off throughout the day, the Germans, so weak from losses and exhausted, unable to stand up to the attack. Towards evening, withdrew. A striking incident of the attack was the solitary figure of a man of the 8th Battalion on the summit of The Butte where he paused for a moment before passing down out of sight. A German in a trench actually walked down the Bapaume road during the night of the 14th Battalion. His sole expressed desire was to see the British and that there were young men in Germany who had had enough of it.

After the withdrawal, the 5th Border took over the Butte position then moved back into close support, the 6th Battalion relieved here by the 4th Battalion. The 5th Border moved farther back into the Flers line. The 8th Battalion renewed the attack with the 5th Border in the morning, but owing to the development on the right from The Butte this was postponed.



THE BUTTE DE WARLENCOURT

From a Sketch made by Rev. C. Lomax, T.D., C.T.F.

The Crosses were erected in memory of those of the 9th, 6th and 8th Battalions The Durham Light Infantry who fell in the attack on the Butte on 5th November, 1916

Patrols searched the front during the night and brought in many wounded, whilst others managed to crawl in.

On November 6th, owing to the postponement of the further attack, the Battalions resumed their normal positions. At 5 a.m. the Battalion moved from the Flers line into the "Cough Drop" and "Drop Alley" Trenches, immediately to the north of High Wood, remaining there until the evening when the 150th Infantry Brigade took over the front, and then returned to its old camp near The Quadrangle, south-west of Mametz Wood.

From now till November 30th, when it was relieved by the composite 6/7th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers (45th Infantry Brigade), the Battalion remained in this camp, and was employed daily on work on the roads. Three small drafts were received during this period, and seven officers joined, these latter including Second-Lieutenant E. Fisher who had recovered from his wounds received in Armentières, and Second-Lieutenant R. Gillender who had also previously served with the Battalion. Major W. G. Harvey, wounded in April, 1915, and who had rejoined later in the same year, was appointed an instructor at a training school and left the Battalion at this time, and Captain E. H. Veitch was appointed staff captain to the 151st Infantry Brigade.

On November 30th, the relief of the Brigade being completed, the Battalion moved off at 4.35 p.m., and marching via Contalmaison and Fricourt halted for the night at the new hutment camp at Becourt, continuing on the following day to Warloy, which was reached at 4.15 p.m. The billets here were in barns, which for the most part were in a very dilapidated state. However, even these were more than acceptable after the conditions of the line, and no time was lost in starting on their improvement, though they were so far gone that nothing very much could be done. The weather continued cold and wet, and as at this time fuel was very short, the sight of a prisoners of war camp on the outskirts of the village with an abundant supply of coal and firewood and a brazier alight at each tent caused some dissatisfaction until it was explained to the men that this apparent indulgence of the German prisoners in comfort denied to them was due to the consideration for our own prisoners in Germany who would suffer in greater measure if any complaints were made of the treatment received by the Germans in the prison camps of the Allies. The fuel difficulty was got over in part by the purchase of trees from the French farms, but taken altogether, even though Christmas was spent out of the line, the rest at Warloy was perhaps the most comfortless of any.

On December 4th Lieutenant-General Sir W. Pulteney, K.C.B., D.S.O., inspected the Brigade and complimented it on the part it had taken in the Somme Battle. Between September, when the 50th

Division carried out its first attack, and the end of November, an advance to a depth of about three and a half miles was made in trench to trench fighting, under conditions of weather and ground impossible of realization by any save those who endured them.

The training area around Warloy was more extensive and varied than usual, and several Brigade schemes of practice in open warfare were carried out.

Christmas was marked by a dinner for the Battalion, at which the "extras" were provided by the officers, and the obtaining of these was a source of some anxiety. Beer there was in plenty, but it was desired to find a change from frozen or bully-beef, and the only alternative to these was pork, of which, however, there was a shortage amounting almost to a famine. The difficulty had not been overcome even so late as Christmas morning, but the acting quartermaster, Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant Wilkinson, again rose to the occasion and purchased a number of pigs which were seen running about a farm on the outskirts of Warloy. These were killed, cooked in the field ovens and eaten, almost before the echoes of their squeals had died away. And because it was pork there was not a single complaint of tough meat! Amongst the festivities was a dinner to which the sergeants invited the officers, for the purpose of which they took over in entirety an estaminet in the village, guaranteeing the owner thereof against any loss of trade from other sources. The success of the evening fully justified their venture.

The Battalion band went the round of the billets, and played for a time outside the Brigade Headquarters' mess. After concluding their programme of carols, the Brigade Commander thanked them from the window and hoped they would kill a great many Germans in the coming year.

Beyond these events there is nothing of interest to relate with regard to the rest.

On December 28th the Battalion moved into Albert and was billeted in the Rue Felix Faure, Albert at this time being practically free from shelling, and on the 31st returned to the forward area, where all active operations had now ceased, and a winter line had been established, relieving the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders in the hutments at Bazentin-le-Petit, and so ended 1916.

A Christmas card issued by one of the Battalions of the 151st Infantry Brigade bore the words, "Greet the Unknown with a cheer," and this very faithfully represented the spirit of the Battalions as the New Year opened. The failure of the Germans in their indescribably strong positions to withstand the attacks of the British Armies, until the conditions of weather and ground made any further operations well-nigh impossible, strengthened the confidence of all in the future.

The hutments now occupied by the Battalion were built on the site of the old village of Bazentin-le-Petit, which, together with Pozières and Contalmaison, had held up the advance on this portion of the Somme front in the fighting in August, 1916, until, after several attempts to capture them had failed, every gun within range was concentrated early one morning on each in turn and they ceased to exist. Whilst the Battalion was resting in Warloy the debris had been cleared away, and in its place had arisen a new village of Nissen huts, which, with their rounded roofs, were supposed to be less visible to aircraft than the ordinary type, though experience showed that this was doubtful; certain it is that they were the very coldest type of hut ever erected. Many other changes had taken place since November, 1916, in the vicinity. The railhead for supplies had been moved forward and a network of sidings now covered the head of Death Valley, just to the south of the village. From these a 60 centimetre line had been laid, up which small motor-tractors conveyed stores of every description as far forward even as High Wood. This 60 centimetre track will be remembered by most, mainly on account of the good going it provided for those moving to and from the trenches until, when from the constant stream of parties passing up and down, the sleepers began to show serious signs of wear, it was made a court-martial offence for any unauthorized person to use it. And so the more devious routes and the duck-board tracks and short cuts across the shell-holes and mud came into their own again. Around the railhead and along the sides of Mametz Wood had grown up a veritable town of huts and shelters, the most amazing feature of which was that they were so little shelled. Occasionally a high-velocity gun fired a round or two and there was a hate with 5·9's round about midnight and again just before dawn, but casualties very seldom resulted, though the 7th Battalion (D.L.I. Pioneers) were unfortunate on one occasion, losing several men, but whether this was due to the high-velocity gun or because a fire had been lit over a buried "dud" shell was never clear; possibly the latter was the cause, for no one heard the arriving of a shell.

Snow which had fallen at the end of December still lay on the ground and frost now set in, which, after varying with rain for a day or two, lasted until the middle of February. The days were mostly bright and bracing, but the nights were appallingly cold, particularly in the posts of the front line where movement was very limited.

On January 4th the Battalion relieved the 9th Battalion in the line. The Flers sector now taken over lay about a mile to the east of the trenches occupied in the previous November, and consisted of a system of detached posts on the line of an old German trench, portions of which had been reclaimed and converted into posts. It

was impossible to reach any of them by day, though some officers managed to get Nos. 9 and 15 without being sniped, but this practice was not encouraged as it drew fire on the posts. As the trench accommodation was so limited only a strength of three hundred and sixty-two other ranks was taken into the line, the remainder being left in a detail camp at the transport lines near to Mametz Wood. The position was held with two Companies in the line, one in support in three deep dug-outs and one in reserve about one hundred yards from Battalion Headquarters where there was good cover. The destroyed village of Flers lay close by and here Brigade Headquarters was established. In connection with Brigade Headquarters an incident occurred the evening it was installed here, which, while it is not in any way relative to the Battalion, except that a man of the Battalion was in part responsible, serves to illustrate in a small way the conditions of life in the forward area. For the evening meal some soup was served. This had a somewhat unusual flavour, and after a few spoonfuls the Brigadier questioned the mess waiter as to where the water had been obtained from which it was made. Inquiry of the cook showed that this had been draining through the roof of the dug-out. No more soup was consumed. On the following morning there came the sequel. Whilst strengthening the roof of the cook-house to make it safer, the highly decomposed body of a German was discovered embedded in the earth.

It was whilst the Battalion occupied the Headquarters at Factory Corner that the Commanding Officer's servant, "Charlie," narrowly escaped becoming a casualty. After labouring some three miles up from camp bearing a quantity of mess stores, which included a jar marked "S. D. Rum" as well as various articles of his own and other people's equipment, he felt, on reaching the dug-out, fairly entitled to a ration of rum. He was in a hurry and did not trouble about a cup, but placed the jar to his mouth and took a good swill. It proved to be lime juice.

Throughout January the Battalion alternately held the front line and the support position with "rests" in the camps at Bazentin-le-Petit and High Wood West. This latter camp was eventually condemned owing to frequent shelling and abandoned. A captured German communique stated that the huts were plainly visible from Loupart Wood near to Grevillers. On the night of January 16th, soon after the Battalion had arrived in this camp, Second-Lieutenants E. Fisher, W. M. Hind and one man were wounded by a shell apparently from a naval gun. Captain P. Kirkup now took over the appointment of Second-in-Command and Lieutenant J. H. Burrell reigned in his stead as Adjutant.

During this period a large number of cases of "trench foot"

occurred, in spite of the use of the reputed preventative, "whale oil," with which the men's feet were rubbed, and the use of gum boots, thigh, with the result that much time was spent in completing answers to questions in the irritating form which had to be supplied in every case of trench foot. These forms arrived after the cases had reached hospital, and contained a variety of queries, such as, "Were the feet rubbed with whale oil?" "Did the man have a change of dry socks?" "Was hot food served daily in the trenches?" and as part of the form had already been completed by the answers of the individual himself in the hospital, some difficulty was always experienced in explaining obviously incorrect statements.

Trench foot did not appear to be entirely confined to men in the trenches, for there was the case of a man of the Battalion employed as a driver on the transport of the Division Headquarters and who had not been near the trenches for some months. He stated "No" as his answer to every such question. The form in this case duly reached the Battalion, accompanied by an irate minute asking for an immediate explanation as to why the precautions had been neglected. In this case the reply was easy and brief, but the people behind the line never seemed to be able to grasp the utter impossibility of carrying out all the orders issued on the subject under the conditions usually prevailing in the front line trenches. Certainly a man did carry spare socks in his trousers' pocket, but when, as so often happened, everything he wore and possessed was completely soaked within a short time of going into the trenches, this did not meet the difficulty. Eventually a scheme was devised whereby a supply of clean socks was sent up to the Battalion each night with the rations by the Quartermaster and wet dirty socks returned in exchange. Sometimes the clean socks arrived dry, sometimes they did not, but in any case trench feet continued. That it was a serious matter is not denied, for in one tour of the trenches in this January of 1917, something like seventy cases occurred in the Battalion.

As considerable difficulty was experienced in communicating with the artillery when their assistance was required by the infantry in the fogs which were prevalent at this period, a test of an S.O.S. chain of posts firing Véry lights was made on January 23rd, whilst the Battalion was holding the line, but it proved a failure owing to misunderstandings, and four minutes elapsed before the S.O.S. was answered.

About this time attacks on the camps with bombs and machine-guns by night-flying aeroplanes began to develop seriously, and the hundreds of camp fires, which as darkness fell had lighted up the countryside, vanished never to return. All lights were now screened and thus passed another feature of old-time wars.

On January 26th the 151st Infantry Brigade was relieved by the

3rd Australian Brigade and moved back to B Camp at Becourt. Three days later a further move was made to Ribemont, billets there vacated by the 22nd Australian Battalion being taken over. For once in a way the men's billets were good although Division Headquarters, with a prior claim, was also in the village.

Ribemont-Mericourt, as it actually was called, the two parts into which it was divided by the River Ancre and the Albert-Amiens Railway, lay between Albert and Corbie, some six miles south-west of the former, the 151st Infantry Brigade occupying Ribemont and the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards and a Battalion of the Rifle Brigade Mericourt. Heilly, about three miles farther south, was a favourite resort of all ranks, being a very picturesque village with estaminets and tea-rooms rather above the average, and being a Corps Headquarters, it had not been spoilt by use for the general billeting of troops.

The frost which had continued throughout January still held and now became extreme. The frozen marshes of the Ancre became crowded with birds and game, all attracted by the narrow stream still kept open by the discharge of hot water from a munition factory in Ribemont. Many of the birds were quite unable to fly, their wings being frozen as the result of becoming wet whilst drinking. In parts the ice was nearly two feet thick and the extreme cold caused the pollard willows on the banks to burst apart with loud reports.

A great football match was played during the rest with the Grenadier Guards, resulting in a draw of one goal each, though the Guards eleven included the Newcastle United centre forward.

CHAPTER IX

BERNY. THE BATTLE OF ARRAS

ON February 16th it became known that the Division was to take over a portion of the French front to the south of Péronne, and the following day the Brigade marched via Mericourt l'Abbaye and Saily Laurette to Hamel, a few miles north of Amiens. Two days later the move forward to the line began, the Battalion marching along the main Amiens-Péronne road through Warfusee-Abancourt to Foucaucourt, a destroyed village which, however, provided fairly good accommodation in huts and cellars, the Battalion Headquarters being in the cellars of the chateau.

The actual trenches to be taken over lay about four miles from Foucaucourt, and were approached by continuing along the main road to Péronne through the once upon a time village of Estrees to near Berny, where the communication trenches or French "Boyaux," as they were called, began. These were deep and without any revetment, an omission which, when the frost broke on February 17th, resulted in their soon becoming impassable with consequent great difficulties in the way of reliefs and supplies reaching the front line, it being then only possible to move over the open by means of the French "Piste" system at night or during foggy weather, as the Germans had entire observation.

The French names, which were retained in use, of the left forward (Berny) sector trenches to be held by the 151st Infantry Brigade were: front line trenches, "Picquant" and "Damocles"; reserve trenches, "Grenadier" and "Chaumes," whilst the communication trenches were known as "Boyau III and IV Bis."

The front system of trenches in this sector faced Genermont, a destroyed Sucerie, St. Christ and Marcheipot, and were not a great distance from the bank of the River Somme which, running almost due east from Amiens, turned sharply to the south near Péronne. The Divisional front was held with two Brigades in the line.

After a preliminary reconnaissance, the Battalion moved up on February 19th to relieve the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) The relief was

not completed until after dawn on the 20th owing to guides leading B Company astray, so that two platoons did not reach their positions till daylight. The two platoons of the 5th Battalion which were being relieved were in consequence compelled to remain with Captain Marley, the Company Commander, till dusk, for the communication trenches were unusable.

The dug-outs or "Sapes," to give them their French name, were exceedingly good. A great find in the ruins of Berny was a large store of solidified alcohol which was a welcome addition to the small amount of this issued as a ration, particularly under the difficult conditions existing at the time for the heating of food.

On February 23rd the 9th Battalion moved into the line, the relief taking all night, the Battalion thereupon taking up the reserve position in Péronne, Parc and Steef Trenches with Headquarters in Poste Command Colonel. During the four days here no less than fifty men went sick as a result of the inactivity imposed on them in the front line, where, owing to the mud, movement of more than a few feet was impossible. At this time the French method of protecting the men against trench foot was adopted in lieu of the whale oil which had been found ineffective for the purpose, although useful for the frying of potatoes in a mess tin over a small alcohol stove. The flavour was rather strong, but some seemed to appreciate it.

On February 27th, what proved to be the last tour in these trenches was entered upon, the 6th Battalion coming into the reserve position as the 8th moved forward. A duck-board track had now been laid overland and the relief was in consequence very expeditious. The rations were now brought up on pack animals to a sunken road at Poste Command Damocles, thus saving an immense amount of labour to the carrying parties.

Between 4.30 and 8 a.m., the front line was intensely shelled, apparently in connection with a raid on a second line Territorial Division, newly arrived from England, which was holding the line to the right. Company Sergeant-Major L. Smith of B Company was killed and three men were wounded.

On March 3rd the Battalion was relieved by 10.15 p.m. on a bright, moonlight, frosty night and marched to Pommier's Camp, Foucaucourt, remaining here for three days whilst the relief of the 50th Division by the 59th Division, which had just arrived from Ireland, where it had been on duty, was in progress. On the 6th a further move was made to Morcourt in the Somme Valley, a few miles below Villers-Bretonneux, where nearly four weeks were spent. Almost immediately after the relief of the Division had been completed, the Germans began their strategic retreat to the Hinden-

burg line, but the Division was not called upon to follow up as it was ear-marked for the coming Battle of Arras. The only other incident of any interest which can now be recalled in connection with Morcourt was the discovery by a farmer of the body of a goose with a bayonet lying beside it near one of the billets occupied by the Battalion. On his reporting this to the Brigade Interpreter, Monsieur Henri Pesle, who promptly carried the tale to Brigadier-General Cameron, an immediate inspection of the Battalion was ordered without result, however, for the culprit had by this time made good his loss from another Battalion.

On March 31st the Division began to move northwards to Arras. The Battalion embussed near to Warfusee, and proceeded through Amiens, lying very peacefully this spring morning in the green valley of the Somme, the spires of its cathedral shining in the sun above the mist and smoke which half concealed the town. Exactly twelve months later, as the Battalion again passed this way, Amiens lay a deserted and apparently doomed city, less than a dozen miles from where the first great German Offensive of 1918 was eventually stayed.

At Talmas, the Battalion debussed, marching from there to billets in Naours where the transport, which had preceded the Battalion on the 30th by a cross-country route, rejoined. On April 2nd, in a heavy snowstorm, the move was continued as far as Gezaincourt, and on the following day to Rebreuve and Honval, the Battalion being divided between these two places for billeting overnight. On the 4th Hericourt was reached and a rest was allowed here before the march was resumed on the 7th. The next stage ended at Maisnil St. Pol where the whole Battalion was accommodated in a huge barn containing bunks for nine hundred men. After arrival here a conference of all officers was held at Brigade Headquarters in Foufflin Ricametz, at which Lieutenant-Colonel Karslake, G.S.O.I., of the 50th Division, briefly sketched an outline of the coming operations in front of Arras, in which the Battalion was to take part. During the past twelve months the Germans had been engaged in the construction of the great Hindenburg line, thus shortening to an appreciable extent their western front. The "hinge" of this new line where it linked up to the north with the original line lay immediately in front of Arras, and was understood to be still incomplete in some respects, and therefore selected for the point of attack. At the same time the French were preparing to attack farther to the south in the neighbourhood of Rheims.

On April 8th the Battalion marched on as far as Izel-les-Hameau where the 6th Battalion was also billeted. Here the Town Major was found to be a pre-war Commanding Officer of the latter Battalion, Sir

H

Henry Havelock Allan. On April 10th Montenescourt was reached, where reorganization was immediately begun. The Companies were organized with platoons of not less than twenty-eight other ranks; battle stores (bombs, ground flares, etc.) were issued and one day's iron ration in addition to the ordinary emergency ration.

Arras was now but a short march distant and the battle had already begun. At 5 p.m. on the 11th, the Battalion was ordered to move forward, but this was postponed till 8 p.m. when, in a blinding snowstorm, it marched through Gouves and Agnez-les-Duisans to Christchurch Caves under the Faubourg de Ronville on the eastern outskirts of Arras, the transport following and being quartered in the Citadel on the south-west side of the town.

These Arras Caves were dug out of solid chalk with Flemish labour when Arras was part of the Netherlands under the Spanish Duke of Alva. In later days they were used by the old merchants as cellars and storehouses. They had since 1914 been used by the French as a shelter for troops, and on the Arras front being taken over by the British, been improved by the construction of ventilating shafts and lighted with electricity. They were also pierced with tunnels leading to the German trenches from which the assaulting troops emerged on April 9th. There were many entrances all in the nature of "drifts" and were so extensive that several thousand troops were assembled in them. The roofs, from which an oozy slime with a dank fetid smell ceaselessly dripped, were supported only by pillars of chalk left for the purpose. No dry place existed throughout them, and the clothing of the men became thickly daubed with the grey slime, and, as they lay huddled together for the sake of warmth, resembled nothing so much as a flock of sheep. Apart from the factor of safety, not a single word can be said for their use. The atmosphere was that of a dense fog and unpleasantly affected the breathing, whilst on emerging into daylight, it was some minutes before the eyes could accustom themselves to the light and glare of the snow-covered ground. It was with an intense relief that the Battalion moved out into the open to occupy a line of old German trenches not far from Beaurains.

Probably on account of the snowstorm, there was no shelling of Arras as the Battalion marched through. A Company, which had been detached from the Battalion on April 8th for work under the R.S.O. at Tinqes, had not yet rejoined.

The battle which had opened on April 9th had progressed very favourably, and a considerable advance had been made. During the afternoon of the 12th the Commanding Officer and Company Commanders reconnoitred Telegraph Hill and the approaches to the fighting which, by this time, had passed beyond the Hindenburg

line and was approaching Wancourt and the Cojeul River in this sector of the battle, i.e., south of the Scarpe. At 6.30 p.m. the Battalion, still three Companies only, moved forward to trenches near to Telegraph Hill, Major J. H. Martin being temporarily in command, Major P. Kirkup as Adjutant, Second-Lieutenant R. H. Wharrier commanding B Company, Captain B. M. Williams C Company and Lieutenant D. Gould D Company. In accordance with the usual practice, a certain number of officers and details remained in Arras at the quartermaster's stores where A Company, having now rejoined, was being equipped. The Battalion was now in support and the final organization for attack was quickly completed.

At 2 a.m. on April 14th the Battalion moved up to its Concentration Point between the Arras-Wancourt road and the village of Neuville Vitasse. Thus the War Diary, but to those watching there came seemingly out of nothing dim figures of men in small groups which passed on seemingly into nothing again, and as the light grew and still they passed, here and there familiar faces, now visible, turned and smiled a little.

At 4 a.m. orders for an attack in conjunction with the 56th Division were received, the 151st Infantry Brigade forming the left flank. An hour later the Battalion moved forward over the ridge on which stood the village of Wancourt and down on to the northern bank of the almost dry Cojeul River, between Wancourt and Heninel, taking over here from the 6th Battalion which moved out ready for attack. At 5.30 a.m. the artillery barrage opened and the 6th Battalion advanced with the 56th Division. At 6 a.m. the Battalion left the river bed, following in support with Companies in two lines fifty yards apart, and with one hundred yards between the Companies. From the Brigade Battle Headquarters a sudden stir was visible along the Cojeul Valley as the Companies left their cover, crossed the river and moved forward up the steep southern bank. Heavy enfilade machine-gun fire broke out from Guémappe on the high ground to the east beyond Wancourt, but they pressed steadily up on to the Tower Ridge in spite of this and the heavy shell-fire with which the Germans were searching the valley.

On the ridge, though now facing both rifle and machine-gun fire, as well as heavily shelled, their advance continued till an old system of German trenches was reached from whence further advance was impossible. By now, considerable numbers of the London Rifle Brigade, Queen's Westminsters of the 56th Division and men of the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) were mixed up with the Companies. At 11 a.m. all were engaged digging in and consolidating the position. A Company, which had reached Battalion Headquarters about noon,

was held there as a reserve. Very heavy rifle and machine-gun fire continued all day, both from in front and from Guémappe.

It was a very trying operation calling for the greatest endurance under the galling fire from the left flank. At one critical moment, when under its losses his Company wavered, Company Sergeant-Major J. Dixon set a fine example to the men around him and carried them forward with him. Private Daniel Fife, whilst his Company was endeavouring to reach an old German trench under intense fire, pushed forward with his Lewis gun into the trench and covered its occupation. Sergeant R. Blaney, when two of his officers had become casualties and the Company was held up, crawled about in the open reorganizing the sections and directing the consolidation of the ground gained, and not to be behind his comrades in their gallant endurance on the exposed ridge, Private Alfred Neal, one of the Battalion stretcher-bearers, dressed and carried in under fire many wounded of the different Battalions, continuing this work throughout the whole day.

The relief was a difficult one. After dark a Battalion of the Rifle Brigade took over the position temporarily pending the arrival of another Battalion, and in consequence of this, Captain B. M. Williams remained behind after his Company (B) had been relieved in order to be able to explain the situation and the dispositions by daylight. By 1 a.m. on the 15th all the wounded had been recovered and the Battalion then withdrew to Telegraph Hill, arriving there at 5 a.m. The total casualties suffered in the action amounted to 3 officers wounded (Second-Lieutenants A. Elliott, A. Ranson and S. Probert) 7 other ranks killed, 47 wounded, and 1 missing. During the afternoon the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (150th Infantry Brigade) took over the Telegraph Hill trenches and the Battalion returned to Ronville Caves.

On April 16th a letter was received from the Brigade Commander of which the following is an extract :

“The Brigade Commander feels very great pleasure in being able to inform the units of the 151st Infantry Brigade that the following message was received by him on the night 14/15th April :

“‘G.A. 202. 14 April. The G.O.C. congratulates your Brigade on the manner in which it carried out a most difficult operation at very short notice.—50th Division.’

“The Brigade Commander wishes to record his entire satisfaction with the manner in which each unit played its part.”

At Ronville reorganization and re-equipping was carried out, varied with work on the roads until the 21st, when the Battalion moved forward to “The Harp” on the slopes of Telegraph Hill, so

called from the resemblance the amazing belts of barbed wire protecting the old German trenches here bore to that instrument, replacing there the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull had now resumed command and all four Companies were present—A Company, Captain F. M. Weeks; B Company, Captain A. Oswell; C Company, Captain R. H. Guest Williams; D Company, Captain W. Johnson.

On the morning of the 21st a serious accident occurred at the Petit College in Arras where a number of the Battalion details were receiving instruction in the use of grenades. One of the class let fall a Mills' No. 5 grenade from which the safety pin had been removed. The Battalion bombing sergeant, Sergeant J. Henderson, rushed to pick it up, shouting to the class to leave the room. Just as he seized the bomb it exploded, blowing off his right hand and also wounding four of the men. This very courageous act and the self-sacrifice of Sergeant Henderson are worthy of record in the highest degree. His loss to the Battalion as bombing sergeant was very serious at a time when grenade fighting was of increasing importance. Some little recompense to him afterwards was the award of the Meritorious Service Medal.

The 22nd was spent in "The Harp," parties being supplied for work in and about Wancourt.

On the 23rd the 6th and 7th Corps continued their advance towards the Sensee River with the 29th and 50th Divisions. The 30th Division, under Major-General J. S. M. Shea, who during part of 1915 and 1916 had commanded the 151st Infantry Brigade, was also to attack on the right of the 50th Division and the 15th Division on the left. Two objectives were given for the advance of the 50th Division: the first, a line running from the Cojeul River on the north to a point about two thousand eight hundred yards south, practically along the ridge facing Cherisy Village and varying in distance from that village from five hundred to one thousand yards; the second, Cherisy and thence north along a track to the railway, following the Cojeul Valley, the order of battle being, 150th Infantry Brigade to attack, 151st Infantry Brigade in support, and 149th Infantry Brigade in reserve.

The Battalion moved forward to Niger Trench near to Wancourt, with its right on the Wancourt-Tilloy road, relieving here the 5th Battalion (D.L.I., 150th Infantry Brigade) which thereupon moved up. Niger Trench was shallow and merely contained a few shelters offering very little cover. D Company suffered three casualties whilst moving in. At zero hour, 5.30 a.m., the 150th Infantry Brigade advanced and reached the first objective, but both the Divisions on the flanks, right and left, were held up except that the 15th Division

captured Guémappe but was unable to hold it, and it therefore became necessary for the 150th Infantry Brigade to withdraw to its original position, the enemy being round both flanks of the first objective. The attack was ordered to be renewed at 6 p.m. and the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) and the 5th Battalion Border Regiment were lent by the 151st Infantry Brigade to carry out the assault with the 150th Infantry Brigade this time in support. Again owing to the failure of the Divisions on the flanks it was found impossible to hold the objective, but a line was established about five hundred yards short of it, and at 7.30 p.m. A Company under Captain F. M. Weeks and B Company under Captain A. Oswell were sent forward to consolidate this and also dig a support line; but this order was countermanded as they were approaching Wancourt Tower, and at 9.30 p.m. Battalion Headquarters, with C and D Companies, joined them at this point and a position was then taken up along the Tower Ridge. At midnight 23/24th, as the front line was not yet in touch with either of the Divisions on the flanks, B Company was ordered to move to the Wancourt Tower and attack the German trenches east of the Tower. However, before the attack developed the 2nd Battalion Yorkshire Regiment (30th Division) gained touch with the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, and at 6 a.m. B Company withdrew to the Battalion position on the ridge.

During the early hours of April 24th orders were received for the 150th Infantry Brigade to withdraw and the new line to be held by the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the left, the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers in the centre, and the 5th Battalion Border Regiment on the right. Very little adjustment was necessary as only a few scattered parties of the 150th Infantry Brigade remained by this time. A, C and D Companies of the 8th Battalion then relieved such troops as were left of that Brigade in the original British line running from the Wancourt Tower to the Cojeul River, B Company and Battalion Headquarters remaining in the position held during the night. Throughout the morning this was intermittently shelled, occasionally very intensely. Patrols having reported no enemy west of the first objective, the 151st Infantry Brigade was ordered to advance at 4 p.m. and dig in on that objective, the 8th Battalion forming the right of the attack, both the Divisions on the flanks co-operating.

At the request of the Battalions taking part in the attack no artillery support was given on the 50th Division frontage, as it was hoped thereby to surprise the enemy. The Divisions on the flanks, however, used their artillery with the result that a heavy barrage was put down by the Germans. At 4 p.m. two platoons each of A and D Companies advanced to occupy the line and at dusk the remainder of the Battalion moved forward under the heavy barrage, and the old

German line was occupied for the third time but this time it was held. Immediate touch was gained with the 5th Border on the left, but not with the 30th Division on the right. All through the night endeavours were made to effect this without success, but just at dawn on the 25th the left of the 30th Division was found by Second-Lieutenant H. B. C. Watts, the Battalion Intelligence Officer, and as soon as darkness fell the trench occupied by the 8th Battalion was prolonged to the right till it joined up, thus establishing a continuous line. It was very difficult in the dark, especially as shelling was incessant, to keep the digging going and in the right direction, but that this was eventually done was due in a great measure to Private P. Molyneux, who already, on the morning of the 25th, had shown great bravery, going out under fire into the open and dressing the wounds of a man lying in front whose cries he heard.

On the night of the 25th, no further operations having taken place, the Battalion was relieved by two Companies of the 9th Battalion Rifle Brigade and moved back into Nepal Trench behind Wancourt.

The total casualties for the action amounted to 1 officer wounded (Captain R. H. Guest Williams), 12 other ranks killed, 62 wounded and 4 missing.

At 9 a.m. on the 26th a Battalion of the 14th Division took over Nepal Trench and the Battalion returned to Telegraph Hill once more, remaining here till 10 a.m. on the 27th when, after relief by the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, it proceeded into billets in Arras in the Petit College for the day, entraining at 7.45 p.m. for Warlencourt Halte in the Humbercourt rest area. This was reached at 2 a.m. on the 28th, and from here the Battalion marched to Warluzel, a village about midway between Arras and Doullens.

At Warluzel the billets were extraordinarily good, too good in fact for anyone to anticipate a lengthy stay in them; such was usually the fortune of the Battalion only during a short rest and therefore there was no surprise, only regret, when orders were received for a move to the Pommiers area on the 1st of May, on which day the Battalion marched through Couterelle, Gombremetz, Humbercamp and Pommiers to Bienvillers-au-Bois, moving again on the evening of the day following to Bellacourt, the 50th Division now being in reserve for the attack on Bullecourt of May 3rd, but for which it was not, however, called upon.

"May 4th, 1917.—Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull, C.M.G., V.D., vacated Command of the Battalion and proceeded to 50th Division Depot Battalion, Ostreville."

So runs the brief entry in the War Diary, but with what mingled

feelings the Battalion said "Good-bye." Perhaps the sense of loss was overshadowed by the glad feeling that he had been spared through the past two years and was now to enter upon duties which, if infinitely less interesting, assured him a greater degree of safety. It is given to some to wield great influence, and those who had served under him recalled many memories of Colonel Turnbull: in the Ypres Salient, at Hill 60, The Bluff, and in the Battles of the Somme and Arras, when his personality meant more to the officers and men of his Battalion than he could ever have known.

Soon after his departure Colonel Turnbull was appointed to command a group of some two thousand Chinese working as a Labour Corps, and it was not until almost a year later, whilst the Battalion was resting at Wittes, near to Aire, after the battles around Estaires, Merville and the Forêt de Nieppe, in the April of 1918, that the two or three still remaining of his old officers were able to visit him at Ebblinghem, where his group was engaged in digging trenches.

At 3.30 p.m. on May 4th the very welcome order was received for a return to Warluzel, and at 4 p.m. the Battalion set off on its way, marching via Riviere Station on to the main Arras-Doullens road and through Couterelle and Coullemont back to the old billets.

Major J. H. Martin, M.C. (late Royal Scots and now King's Own), now assumed command, and on the 15th May, Captain P. Kirkup, M.C., rejoined from Brigade Headquarters after a staff course and became Second-in-Command, Captain J. H. Burrell again taking over the appointment of Adjutant.

For a little over a fortnight the Battalion remained in Warluzel, carrying out the usual training which, however, included a rather more ambitious scheme than was generally attempted during a rest. The training area around Lucheux, which lay between Warluzel and Doullens, contained an extensive field firing-range, and on this a very realistic scheme of attack was organized by the Brigade Commander, carried out with ball cartridge and grenades. Two incidents in connection with this, but naturally unrecorded in the War Diary, were the stampeding of the horses of the Scots Greys from their lines over the hill behind the range by stray bullets and also of the Corps Commander who, as he stepped out of his car in order to watch the proceedings, was greeted by a rifle grenade which burst only a short distance away. However, there were no casualties in either case and no official complaints.

Lucheux, a pre-war health resort with some well-known medicinal springs, was most picturesque; still almost mediaeval in appearance and with a fine castle in use as a convalescent hospital.

On May 18th Warluzel passed into a happy remembrance only, and a move was made to Monchy-au-Bois, a village at one time in



LIEUTENANT COLONEL J. H. MARTIN, D.S.O., M.C.

Commanding May 1917 to March 1918.

feelings the Battalion said "Good-bye." Perhaps the sense of loss was overshadowed by the glad feeling that he had been spared through the past two years and was now to enter upon duties which, if infinitely less interesting, assured him a greater degree of safety. It is given to some to wield great influence, and those who had served under him recalled many memories of Colonel Turnbull: in the Ypres Salient, at Hill 60, The Bluff, and in the Battles of the Somme and Arras, when his personality meant more to the officers and men of his Battalion than he could ever have known.

Soon after his departure Colonel Turnbull was appointed to command a group of some two thousand Chinese working as a Labour Corps, and it was not until almost a year later, whilst the Battalion was resting at Wittes, near to Aire, after the battles around Estaires, Valenciennes and the Forêt de Nieppe, in the April of 1918, that the two remaining of his old officers were able to visit him at Valenciennes, where his group was engaged in digging trenches.

At 3 p.m. on May 4th the very welcome order was received to move to Warluzel, and at 4 p.m. the Battalion set off on its journey via Riviere Station on to the main Arras-Doullens line, through Couterelle and Coullemont back to the old billets. Captain J. H. Martin, M.C. (late Royal Scots and now King's) now assumed command, and on the 15th May, Captain J. H. Martin, M.C., rejoined from Brigade Headquarters after a staff appointment and became Second-in-Command, Captain J. H. Burrell again became Adjutant.

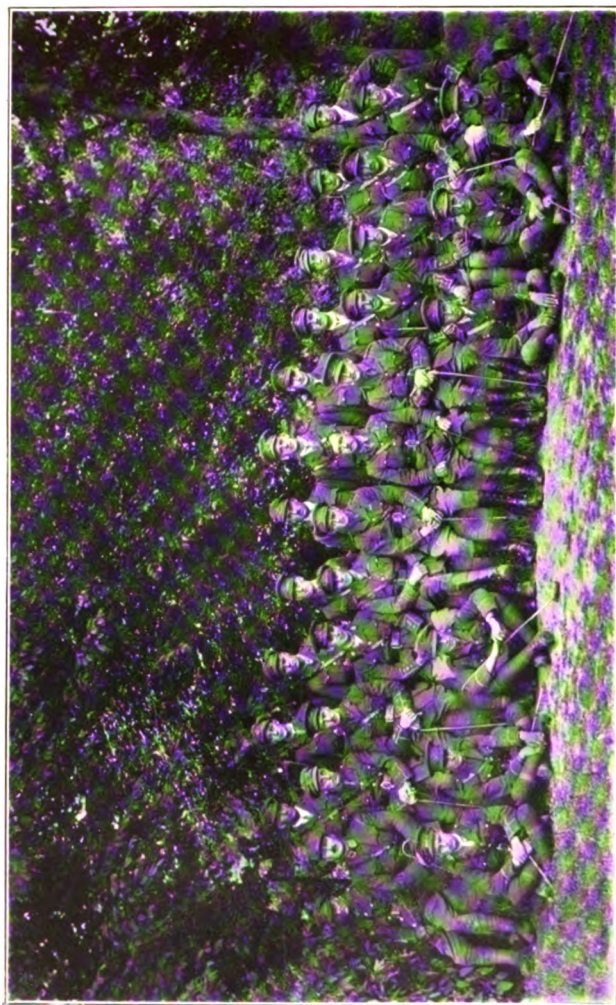
For a fortnight the Battalion remained in Warluzel, where it received usual training which, however, included a rather unusual exercise more than was generally attempted during a rest period. The exercise was carried out around Lucheux, which lay between Warluzel and Arras, and had an extensive field firing-range, and on this a very realistic attack was organized by the Brigade Commander. The attack was made with ball cartridge and grenades. Two incidents in connection with the exercise, but naturally unrecorded in the War Diary, were the escape of the horses of the Scots Greys from their lines over the top of the ridge by stray bullets and also of the Corps Commander who stepped out of his car in order to watch the exercise and was hit by a rifle grenade which burst only a short distance from him. There were no casualties in either case and

the Battalion moved to a war health resort with some well-known scenery, the most picturesque; still almost mediaeval in character. The castle in use as a convalescent hospital was a fine sight and passed into a happy remembrance only to be replaced by Monchy-au-Bois, a village at one time in



LIEUTENANT COLONEL J. H. MARTIN, D.S.O., M.C.
Commanding May 1917 to March 1918.

OFFICERS OF THE BATTALION
SOUASTRE, MAY, 1917.



Back Row (left to right)—

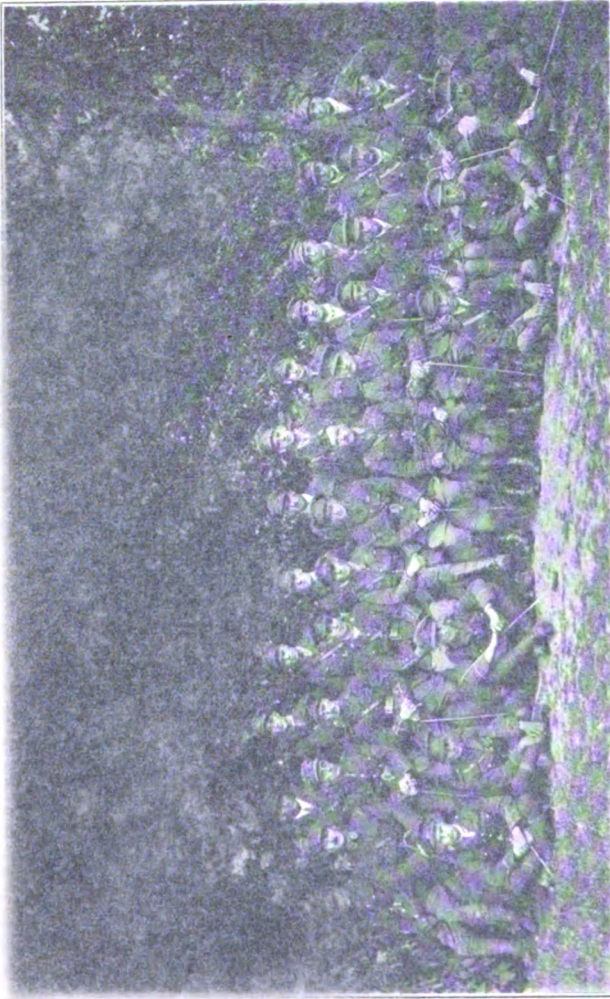
(1) 2nd Lt. G. D. Dodds, (2) 2nd Lt. H. B. C. Watt, (3) 2nd Lt. D. Sherwood, (4) 2nd Lt. W. Woodward,
(5) 2nd Lt. T. W. Nicholson, (6) 2nd Lt. H. S. McKinlay, (7) 2nd Lt. H. L. Anson, (8) 2nd Lt. O. L. Rutter,
(9) 2nd Lt. A. R. Twigg, (10) 2nd Lt. W. H. Robinson, (11) 2nd Lt. F. S. Wakefield.

Sitting (left to right)—

(1) 2nd Lt. S. Boys, (2) Mons Elbel (Interpreter), (3) 2nd Lt. Asst. Adj. J. Hutchinson, (4) Lt. J. Hopper,
(5) Capt. J. McNiff (R.A.M.C.), (6) Capt. A. Oswald, M.C., (7) Major P. Kirkup, M.C., (8) Lt.-Col. J. H. Martin, M.C.,
(9) Capt. G. D. Gould, (10) Capt. F. M. Weeks, (11) Lt. N. Clark, (12) Lt. H. B. Holdsworth, (13) 2nd Lt. R. Gillender

Front Row (left to right)—

(1) 2nd Lt. J. Bramwell, (2) 2nd Lt. F. C. S. Harrison, (3) 2nd Lt. W. H. Denholm, (4) 2nd Lt. H. Townsend,
(5) 2nd Lt. E. A. Pike, (6) 2nd Lt. J. F. Hobson.

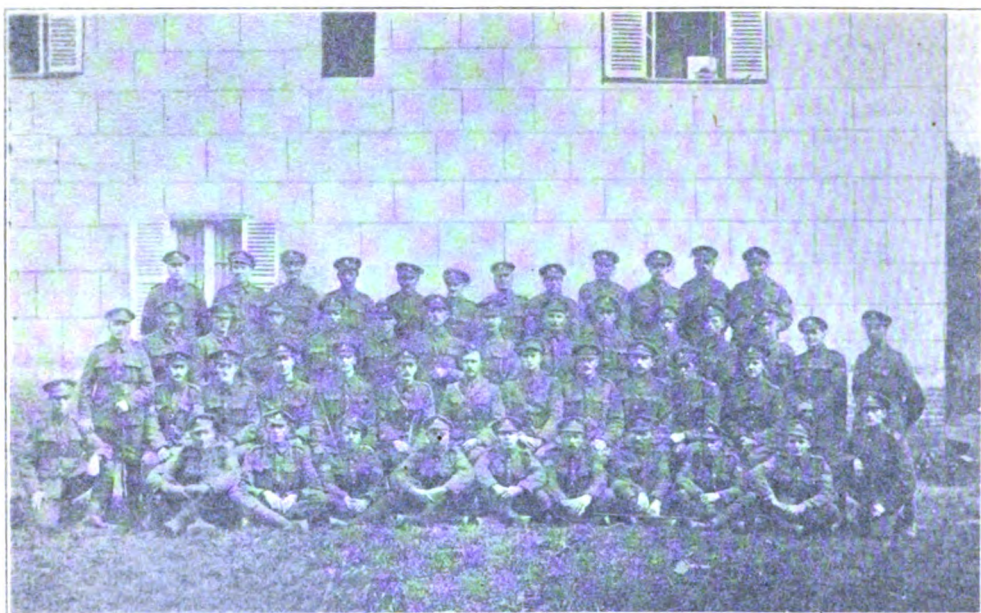


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H.
Sgt. J. Whittle, Sgt. R. Wilkinson, Sgt. W. Shelton, —, Sgt. Fairbrother, M.M.,
Sgt. J. Nicholson, Cook Sgt. W.H. Smith, Sgt. J.W. Brown, Sgt. J. Hunt, Sgt. E. Ellis,
Lieutenant, Tfr. Sgt. J. Robison, D.C.M., M.M., S. Sgt. J. McCullum, Sgt. T. McManus, —,
C.Q.M.S. F. Wise, Sgt. H. Jones.
C.Q.M.S. J. Bore, C.Q.M.S. F. Atkinson, C.Q.M.S. H.N. DIXON, CSM. T. Chrisp,
Col. J.H. Martin, Maj. P. Kirkcup, R.Q.M.S. Wilkinson, CSM. S. Aberdeen, D.C.M.

Sgt. G. Davies, Sig. Sgt. G. Maddison, Sgt. W. Smith, Sgt. Dunn, —, Sgt. Heron, Prov. Sgt.
Key St. Sgt. R. Norman, Sgt. Murphy, Sgt. J. McGoran, M.O., O.R.O.

• SOUASTRE. 1917.



Pte. C. Collins, Pte. R. Atkinson, S.B.,
Pte. G. Lyons, Pte. J. Brown,
Mtlch. S.B., Sgt. J. Hunt, Lt. J. Bramwell, Sgt. J. W. Brown,
Pte. Steele S.B., Pte. Hain S.B.,
Pte. Musgrove, Pte. W. Pinder, Pte. McPherson, Pte. W. Bell, Pte. R. Molyneux.

the German front line held prior to the retirement to the Hindenburg line in the March of 1917. Though little more than its foundations remained for the most part, and a bivouac camp had to be formed, the sites were good and the whole of the Brigade was accommodated in and around the village.

Between Monchy-au-Bois and Ransart the whole of the old German system of trenches remained still in very good condition, and quite apart from its interesting features provided the best training ground for the practising of trench to trench attacks yet met with, and some strenuous schemes resulted.

On May 20th Brigadier-General N. J. G. Cameron presented Military Medals to Lance-Sergeant J. Redshaw, Corporal D. Pipe, Privates T. Bates, P. Molyneux, H. Boothe and Stretcher-bearer A. Neal. Sergeant R. Blayney, who had also been awarded this medal, was not present, having proceeded to England for a commission. At the same parade the Battalion football team, which had won the Brigade competition at Warloy in December, 1916, received their medals.

After nearly a week at Monchy-au-Bois orders were received on May 23rd for a move to Saulty, raising hopes that a return to Warluzel might materialize, but after one night in Saulty another move on the chessboard took place and the Battalion marched to Souastre, a village which, though it had been for over two years within a mile or two of the old French front line vacated when the Germans retired in March, was entirely unscathed. The billets were good, and in addition a very well laid out French hutted camp was available. As it was now almost a month since Arras was left, the minds of many began to be exercised as to what the Battalion was destined for in the near future and where. Yet the days passed on into June without any sign of a return to the line. During the stay in Souastre a Memorial Cross was made by the Battalion Pioneers and conveyed to the Butte de Warlencourt, where it was erected together with those of the 6th and 9th Battalions. The following words were inscribed upon it:

“In Memory of the gallant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry, who fell near this place in an attack, November 5th, 1916. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.*”

Constructed of wood it was intended to serve only as a temporary memorial pending the end of the war, and has since been sent home to find a permanent resting-place in Durham Cathedral.

On June 3rd the Battalion sports were held. The bands of the 6th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry and 5th Battalion Border

122 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

Regiment were present, and entries were received from every unit in the area. The day was gloriously fine and the meeting most enjoyable and successful from every point of view. At its conclusion the Brigade Commander presented the prizes and said many complimentary things about Lieutenant-Colonel Martin and the Battalion generally.

On the night of June 4/5th the Battalion bivouacked at Foncquilliers and defended it the following morning in practice operations against the other Battalions of the Brigade. Contact aeroplanes co-operated, and on conclusion of the operations landed and a number of officers were given short flights. Lieutenant-General Sir T. D. O. Snow, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., commanding the 7th Corps, was present, and after a conference on the scheme the Brigade marched past.

At last, on June 12th, signs of the end of the rest came when Company Commanders reconnoitred the forward area. The two following days were spent in preparation, and on the 15th June the 50th Division relieved the 18th Division in the line, the 151st Infantry Brigade relieving the 53rd Infantry Brigade.

The Battalion marched off from Souastre at 6.55 a.m. on the 15th via Adinfer, and the day proved perhaps the hottest ever experienced, consequently a halt was made between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. in the shelter of a wood, after which the march was resumed and at 8 p.m., after a most exhausting trek, in spite of the long halt, camp was reached near to Henin-sur-Cojeul. This was in part occupied by some details of the 8th Battalion Suffolk Regiment.

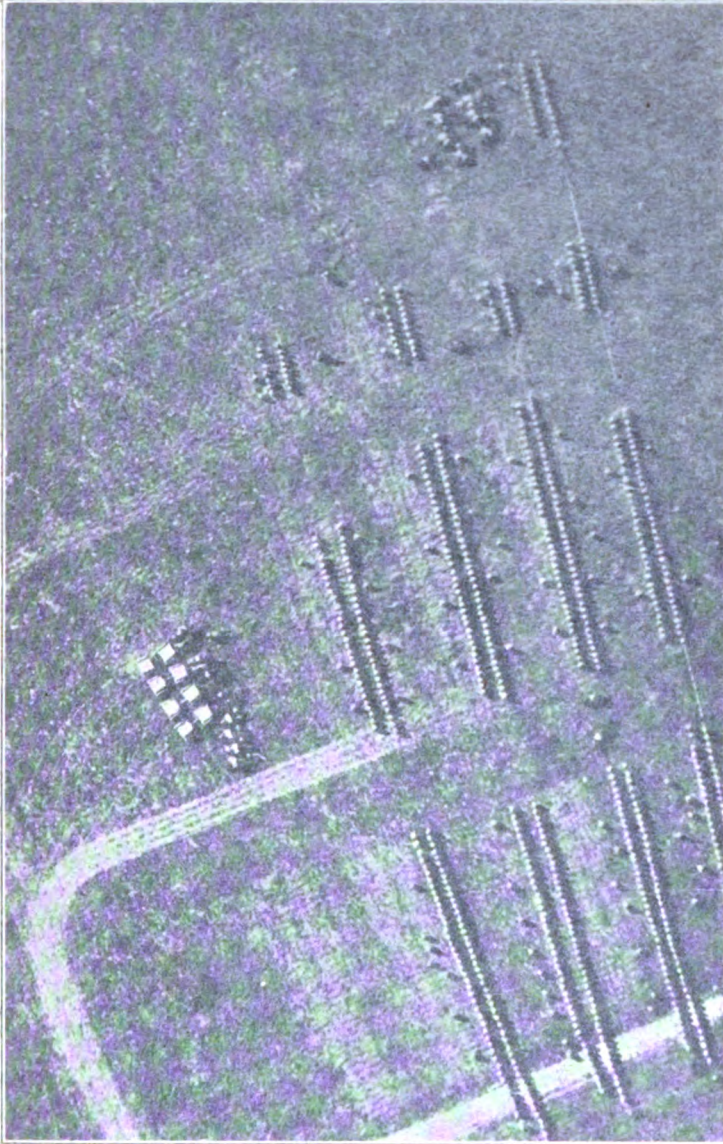
The morning and afternoon of the 16th were spent in preparations for the relief of the 8th Battalion Suffolk Regiment in the support position, and at 9 p.m. the leading platoon moved off, followed by the remainder at five minute intervals.

The front taken over by the 50th Division extended from in front of Cherisy on the right to the Arras-Cambrai road on the left and included the scene of the April fighting.

The Battle of Arras had ended soon after the 50th Division had moved out to rest and the front had now settled down to normal trench warfare and a complete trench system was established. The little cemetery under the trees near to Heninel had grown since April. Cherisy Village was still in the hands of the Germans, but Guémappe had been captured and was now held.

The dispositions of the Battalions in the Brigade sector were as follows: front line, 6th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry, with the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the right and "The Rangers" (London Regiment on the left, the 8th Battalion and the Queen's Westminster in support.

The support position occupied by the Battalion lay along the



8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry

9th Battalion
NEAR FONCQUELLERS,
May, 1917.

15th Infantry Division

122. 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

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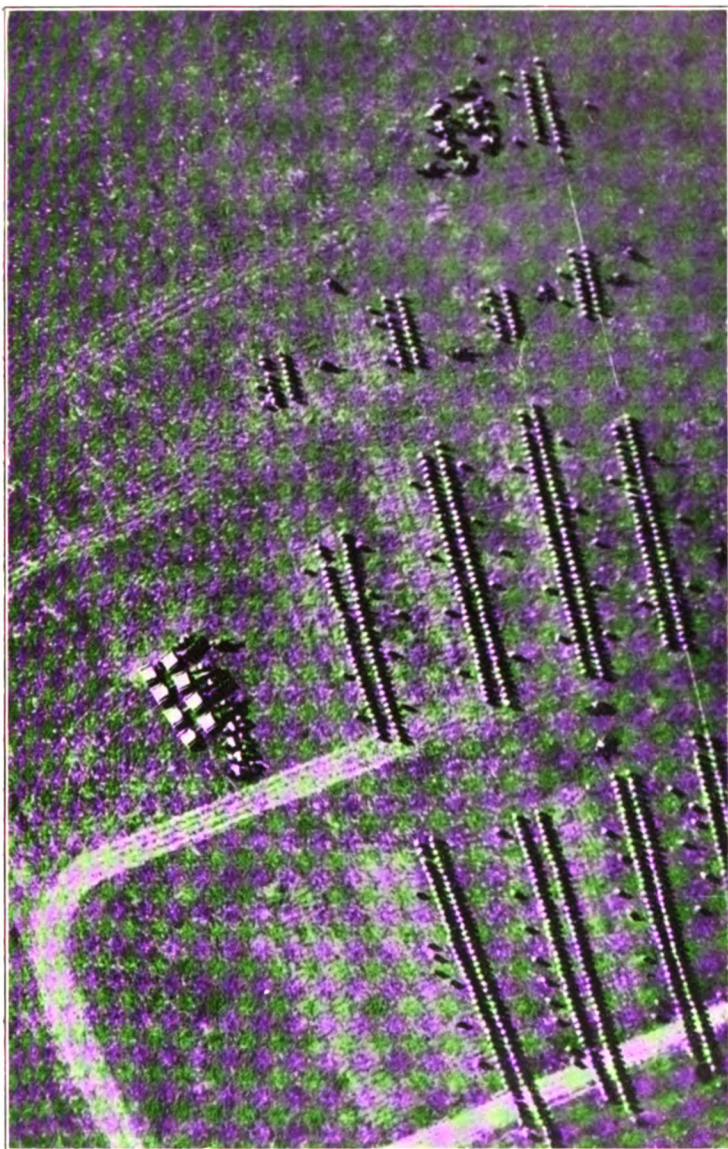
The morning and afternoon of the 16th were spent in preparations for the attack. At 11 a.m. the leading platoon moved off, followed by the rest of the Battalion at five minute intervals.

The front line over by the 50th Division extended from in front of Arras to the right to the Arras-Cambrai road on the left and was the line of the April fighting.

As the fighting at Arras had ended soon after the 50th Division had been relieved, the front had now settled down to normal trench warfare. A complete trench system was established. The little village of Henin-sur-Cojeul near to Heninel had grown since April. The village of Guémappe was in the hands of the Germans, but Guémappe was now held.

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The positions occupied by the Battalion lay along the



8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry

9th Battalion
NEAR FONCQVILLERS,
May, 1917.

151st M.G. Coy.

151st T.M. Battery

Wancourt Tower Ridge, with Battalion Headquarters and the reserve Company at "The Nest," a tangle of trenches just above Heninel. The right and left forward Companies were in Egret Loop and Egret Trench respectively, the support Company being also in Egret Trench. This position was reached by the communication trench, Forster Avenue, from the bank of the Cojeul River, a short distance from Heninel.

The relief was completed without casualties by 11 p.m., and after a quiet night the usual routine of work in the trenches was begun. This included the carrying of gas projectors to the front line and work on deep dug-outs in Egret and Mallard Trenches. As a result of the work done one platoon of the support Company in Egret Trench was able to move into Mallard Trench on the 19th, and by the 20th the whole Company could be accommodated in this trench. Duck Trench, which was full of dead Germans, was filled in. About eighty Germans were buried here.

On the evening of the 20th the 5th Battalion Border Regiment took over the support position and the Battalion moved up into the front line in relief of the 6th Battalion.

The trenches comprising the front line which faced the village of Cherisy were: Jackdaw Trench, Bullfinch Trench and Wren Trench, these holding three Companies, and Mallard Trench held by the close support Company. Battalion Headquarters were in "The Quarries." Observation was in the hands of the Germans from Vis-en-Artois and also from an isolated trench near to the road from Heninel to Cherisy about five hundred yards from the latter. As a consequence of this no cooking was possible in the trenches and movement by day reduced to a minimum. The isolated trench being found by patrols to be unoccupied, though it contained a supply of bombs ready for use, was on the night of the 22/23rd connected up with Dead Boche Sap, running out from the front line, and a block established in it garrisoned by ten bombers, and the whole wired round.

The tour of duty lasted until the night of the 24/25th June when the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers took over. This was an unfortunate tour during which casualties were suffered each day, mainly through fish-tail bombs. Company Sergeant-Major T. Crisp was killed by a whiz-bang on the morning of the 23rd, and the total casualties for the four days amounted to 4 other ranks killed and 14 wounded. On relief the Battalion marched overland from the trenches to a camp at Boisleux-au-Mont, where a week was spent.

On July 1st Major-General Sir P. S. Wilkinson inspected the Brigade during the day, and in the evening the Battalion moved off for the trenches once more, halting for the night in a deserted camp between Mercatel and Henin-sur-Cojeul where C and D Companies

remained whilst A and B Companies, with Battalion Headquarters, proceeded a short distance farther on to the camp occupied by the details of the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.

At 5 a.m. on July 2nd Companies moved forward independently, with five minute intervals between platoons, to the Reserve Battalion area at Neuville Vitasse; B, C, and D Companies occupying old German trenches here which had formed part of the Hindenburg line and A Company "Twig Lane." Here there was considerable freedom of movement and it was even possible to have the field kitchens brought up. Preparations for the taking over of the line were completed, and the left support Battalion area around Marliere, north of the River Cojeul, occupied by the 168th Infantry Brigade, was reconnoitred. At 10.30 p.m. platoons moved off with two and a half minute intervals. A and D Companies took over the trenches in and about Marliere where Battalion Headquarters were stationed, B and C Companies moving into Nepal Trench.

Marliere, which had been a collection of a few houses, lay a hundred yards or so to the north of Wancourt on the road leading to Monchy-le-Preux. Here there were caves similar to those of Ronville, which gave secure protection against shell-fire and though small, afforded accommodation for a dressing-station as well as Headquarters with its details. The Battalion here relieved the 13th (Kensington) Battalion Royal Fusiliers.

On the evening of July 3rd, the 151st Infantry Brigade having taken over the left sub-sector of the Divisional front, i.e., from across the Cojeul River on the right to the Arras-Cambrai road on the left, the 5th Battalion Border Regiment with the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) held the front line with the 6th Battalion as support Battalion, the 8th Battalion then returned to Neuville Vitasse. The transport lines were now permanently settled at Mercatel.

On July 6th the Battalion took over the front line trenches held by the 5th Border. These consisted of Hoe Trench and its four posts, Cavalry Farm and Trench astride the Arras-Cambrai road, Lock and Key Trench, Rake Trench and Shovel Trench, with Battalion Headquarters at the entrance to Southern Avenue Communication Trench. The line on the left was held by the 12th Division and the Divisional sub-sector in front of Cherisy on the right by the 149th Infantry Brigade. A somewhat uneventful time was spent here till July 10th, when the 5th Border Regiment again took over. Monchy-le-Preux, held by the 12th Division, was the scene of much enemy activity probably on account of its commanding position, and indeed this was the case during the whole of the three months the 50th Division remained on this front. In the trench at Cavalry Farm a German machine-gun was salvaged and sent back to find its home

eventually in the Drill Hall at Durham. After relief on the 10th the Battalion returned to Brigade reserve at Neuville Vitasse until the following day when it moved forward into the support area, taking this over from the 9th Battalion, which in its turn relieved the 6th Battalion to the right of the 5th Border Regiment. The support area now occupied by the Battalion differed from that taken over on July 2nd from the Royal Fusiliers, and the adjustment of the front having been made in the meantime the following were the dispositions in support: The left forward Company held Panther and Lion Trenches, the right forward Company Egret Trench, the support Company Curlew and Duck Trenches, all these being south of the Cojeul River, with Battalion Headquarters in dug-outs in the Sunken Road and also on the south bank near to the entrance of Kestral Avenue Communication Trench. All this area was under the observation of the enemy from the Bois de Vert. The reserve Company was at Marliere.

On July 14th the left sub-sector was taken over from the 5th Border Regiment. During this relief the enemy made a raid on the 6th Battalion Royal West Kents on the left and put down a considerable barrage, but fortunately no casualties resulted.

It had been intended to dig a new front line trench in this sub-sector from Southern Avenue to Thorn Post, and so on July 16th the site for this was taped out and at night three hundred men of the 9th Battalion dug the line to a depth of three and a half feet. The enemy put down a barrage at 10.15 p.m., but as soon as this ceased the work was begun and successfully completed. Two days later, on July 18th, after a very quiet time in which only one casualty occurred, the Battalion was relieved by the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and moved back into camp west of Neuville Vitasse for eight days' rest.

On July 27th the 151st Infantry Brigade became the right Brigade of the Divisional front, relieving the 150th Infantry Brigade, and the Battalion moved into Henin Camp to Brigade Reserve, relieving the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment and remaining here until the 31st when the 5th Border Regiment was relieved in Bullfinch, Jackdaw, Mallard and Cuckoo Reserve Trenches in the left Battalion sub-section of the Brigade front, Battalion Headquarters being again in "The Quarries." On August 4th the 5th Border Regiment returned to the line and the Battalion took over the support position at "The Nest," Egret Loop, Egret Trench and "The Bank." The four days spent in the line passed with the normal amount of shelling and the usual fish-tails. Early on the morning of the 4th the 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers who were on the left carried out a raid on the enemy sap, running out from Narrow Trench in front of the north-west corner of Cherisy, and probably on account of this

Bullfinch Trench was shelled with Minnenwerfers during "stand to," one Minnie killing three and wounding one other rank.

During the night of August 4/5th the 12th Division to the north of the 50th recaptured the northern end of Hook Trench in front of Monchy-le-Preux.

A change in the dispositions of the support position was made on August 6th: C Company moved to Mallard Trench in close support to the 5th Border Regiment and A Company extended its frontage to include the portion of Egret Trench vacated by C Company. Two days later the Battalion again took over the front line, relieving the 5th Border, which in the evening carried out a raid on Night Trench, with the object of capturing prisoners in order to get identification of the German unit opposed to the 50th Division, but as the trench contained only a single sentry group which escaped before the raiders reached it, the object was not attained.

On the following day, August 9th, after a thirteen and a half hours' bombardment the 12th Division successfully raided the enemy's trench system between the Arras-Cambrai road and Bit Lane.

Raids at this time were of weekly occurrence, the enemy thereby being kept in a state of constant tension.

Battalion Headquarters was now transferred to Cuckoo Reserve, a change all for the good, for "The Quarries," whilst they possessed some fairly commodious deep dug-outs, were open towards the enemy and afforded a good target for artillery. The front line was now held by a series of posts and fortified sap-heads with a view to minimizing casualties and losses in the event of raids.

Whilst returning from a patrol on August 10th Sergeant Ryle was accidentally killed, this being the only casualty suffered during the last two days of the tour. On the 11th Lieutenant-Colonel Martin proceeded on a visit to the Third Army School and Major J. S. McLeod, D.S.O., took command of the Battalion temporarily during the absence of Major P. Kirkup on a Staff Course.

During the morning of August 12th the Battalion was relieved by the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and moved to the camp west of Neuville Vitasse. From here on the 20th it moved to the old trenches east of the village, relieving two Companies of the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment and now became Brigade Reserve.

The Battalion about this time lost its Acting Quartermaster, Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant Harry Wilkinson, who towards the end of August said "Au revoir," and proceeded to England to receive a commission as a Quartermaster. Wounded in the April of 1915, he had later in the same year rejoined the Battalion, of which he was one of the longest-serving members. For nearly two years he had been Acting Quartermaster, and it was only because of his devotion

to the Battalion, and perhaps a little obstruction to that course from those who feared to lose him, that he had not been commissioned earlier. The Battalion never suffered if Wilkinson could help it, as witness the incident of the tents in Baisieux Wood and his studied ignorance of numbers of these which he had hidden whilst the Staff Captain of the Brigade, trying to set matters right, was counting those in possession of the Battalion, and at times the enjoyment of many things which other Battalions lacked but the 8th had in plenty, and took for granted, were due to his foresight and energy; and when he left all hoped for his return. However, owing to the "exigencies of the service," an excuse which covered a multitude of things, Captain W. McBeath was appointed Quartermaster in his stead with Company Quartermaster-Sergeant Harry Smurthwaite as Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant, and again the Battalion was fortunate, as was also the 11th Battalion (D.L.I.), to which Lieutenant and Quartermaster Wilkinson was eventually posted. Writing of Captain and Quartermaster Wilkinson, M.C., as he is now, brings to mind his batman and shadow, Private "Mick" White, an old Hussar who had served throughout the South African War. So happy was he as such that when at Foucaucourt in February, 1917, he was evacuated with trench fever he broke out of hospital the same day and returned to his cellar in Foucaucourt.

On August 23rd Lieutenant-Colonel Martin returned and in the evening the Battalion relieved the 5th Battalion Border Regiment in the left sub-section of the Brigade front, the relief being complete by 1.30 a.m. on the 24th. The dispositions were: right forward company—A Company in Farm Trench and posts on the south of the Cojeul River; left forward Company—C Company in Farm Trench south of the Arras-Cambrai road and Plough Trench north of that road. The support Company was B Company in Hoe Support and Lock Trench, whilst D Company was in reserve in Rake Trench. The line was held until the 27th when the 5th Border Regiment relieved the Battalion, which then returned to Neuville Vitasse with the exception of D Company which was left at Marliere. The Battalion only reached Neuville Vitasse at midnight and the following day was ordered forward again into the Brigade support area as on July 10th, and on the 31st again relieved the 5th Border Regiment in the front line. The relief was without incident, though towards its conclusion gas projectors were discharged on to the German positions at Hillside Farm, Chalk Pit and Cherisy, as a result of which the enemy put down a slight barrage round Rake Dump and along the Cojeul Valley.

September 1st was a very quiet day. On the 2nd the Cojeul Valley was reconnoitred in the early morning in the direction of the

enemy's position in connection with a minor operation to be carried out in the evening. Unfortunately one of the patrols was seen and fired on, one man being killed.

A Minnenwerfer located in St. Rohart's Quarry having caused some trouble and damage to the trenches in the sub-section, it was decided to attempt to put it out of action, and on the night 2nd/3rd September four Stokes guns of the 151st Trench Mortar Battery, covered by two patrols of the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the south side of the Cojeul River and four patrols of the 8th Battalion under Lieutenant A. L. Wilson and Second-Lieutenants O. Sherwood, H. S. McKinlay and F. W. Harrison on the north side of the river, moved out at 10.45 p.m. into a previously selected position in No Man's Land. At midnight the Stokes guns opened fire upon the Quarry, firing at the rate of 15 rounds per minute, whilst at the same time two Vickers machine-guns fired on the area around St. Rohart's Factory. A third Vickers gun and an 18-pounder fired on Hillside Work. The operation lasted 15 minutes when all withdrew under cover of a barrage. The enemy put down a slight barrage in response, but the operation was concluded and the withdrawal carried out without a single casualty.

The 3rd passed quietly with the exception of a slight barrage across the Arras-Cambrai road, which damaged the trench here badly and wounded one man. The only incident on the 4th was the firing by a machine-gun and gas Granatenwerfer on patrols down the Arras-Cambrai road.

On September 5th the Battalion was relieved in the morning by the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and moved to York Lines Hutment Camp near Mercatel, where, on the 8th, C Company began organizing in preparation for a raid to take place on September 15th, and a portion of the ground near the camp was prepared as a model of the actual scene of the raid. On the 9th the Battalion, under command of Major J. S. McLeod with Second-Lieutenant H. B. C. Watt as Adjutant, moved in the morning into the Hindenburg line. On the day following, C Company and attached details under Captain B. M. Williams returned to York Lines and continued their training for the raid. The 11th and 12th were spent quietly in the Hindenburg line, and on the morning of the 13th the Battalion relieved the 5th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment in the left sub-section of the right sector of the Divisional front, moving via St. Martin-sur-Cojeul and thence along the Cojeul Valley through Heninel to Forster Avenue. The relief was complete by 11.45 a.m. Except for slight Minnenwerfer fire on the support line, the day passed quietly. The Germans on the left were busy on a new trench in front of Narrow Trench, but No Man's Land was featureless, with no obstacle to the

raid. The 14th was also a very quiet day, and during the afternoon the 9th Battalion came up into the 8th area preparatory to the raid of the following day. C Company moved back from the centre (Cable Sap and Short Alley) into Cuckoo Reserve and the 9th Battalion occupied the front line and support trenches, and in the evening reconnoitred No Man's Land and cut gaps in the wire.

On September 15th, after a quiet night, the final preparations were made, and at 4 p.m. three Companies of the 9th Battalion left the front line behind a very effective creeping barrage and entered their objectives in Narrow Trench with very little resistance. Twenty-three prisoners were captured and seventy of the enemy were estimated as killed. Parties of Royal Engineers, accompanying, blew in the shafts of the deep dug-outs, and at 4.30 p.m. the raiders withdrew according to time-table. The only enemy response was a barrage from 4.5 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. on the Battalion front and support lines which did considerable material but little personal damage. The prisoners taken belonged to the 76th R.I.R., 17th Reserve Division. The new Thernit shells were used, and in addition to the Corps and Divisional artillery covering the raid, seventy machine-guns fired overhead. All the enemy light signals during the raid were copied by officers detailed for the purpose, firing coloured V6ry lights. At 6.45 p.m. C Company was ready in the front line for the second phase of the raid and at 7.40 p.m. left the trenches and entered its objectives. The enemy put down a barrage as the first wave passed through the wire, and this was very intense. Two of the German machine-guns in action were captured and brought back, and blocks were made on either flank of the enemy front line whilst the raiders entered the support trenches. Some even penetrated the outskirts of Cherisy but found no enemy there. Though the Germans put a barrage down on their own front line it caused no casualties. Twelve of the enemy were killed and three made prisoners whilst two wounded men of the 9th Battalion were found and rescued and, after twenty minutes, C Company withdrew, leaving behind forty copies of "Deutch Gefargene in England." During the withdrawal two men of the Company were unfortunately killed in crossing No Man's Land through the barrage. The total casualties amounted to Captain M. J. McNiff, Royal Army Medical Corps, wounded, 2 other ranks killed, and 10 wounded. At 4 a.m. on the 16th the third phase of the raid was carried out in the form of a gas projection, and later in the day, which was very quiet, patrols reported the enemy inactive and not in his front line.

On the morning of the 17th, after relief by the 5th Border Regiment, the Battalion occupied the support position without incident and a very quiet day passed. The 19th and 20th were quiet,

uneventful days. At 11.45 a.m. on the 21st the front line was again taken over from the 5th Battalion Border Regiment. The situation remained quiet till the evening of the 22nd when Minnenwerfer caused usual damage to the trenches, and an enemy sniper wounded Second-Lieutenant H. B. C. Watt near Cable Sap. In return the enemy trenches were bombarded by all trench mortars. The Minnenwerfer was active again on the 23rd, but only one casualty, one other rank wounded, was suffered. An enemy patrol some forty strong, opposite Wren Lane, was caught by Lewis gun-fire and trench mortars and dispersed. Again both on the 24th and 25th the Minnenwerfer was active, and all trench mortars, light, medium and heavy, retaliated without result. There was also more artillery fire on these days and a large enemy patrol was again out in front of Wren Lane. During the afternoon of the 25th the Battalion was relieved by the 5th Border Regiment and said "good-bye" to the Arras front line.

Until September 29th the Battalion remained in Brigade Reserve in Henin Camp (B and C Companies with Battalion Headquarters), whilst A Company occupied part of the Hindenburg line and D Company Concrete Trench. On the 29th Battalion Headquarters with B and C Companies were relieved by the 6th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and moved back into Divisional reserve in York Lines. A and D Companies were also relieved, but remained in the Hindenburg line to which D Company now moved to furnish working-parties under the Chief Royal Engineer.

On October 1st the disposition of the Battalion was still the same, but on this day B Company (Captain R. H. Wharrier, M.C.) proceeded to Achiet-le-Petit to prepare a camp there for the 50th Division Depot Battalion. The following day A and D Companies rejoined at York Lines and C Company, under Lieutenant G. D. Gould, marched to Gommecourt to take over Carlton Hill Camp and prepare a training area for the Battalion, the 50th Division now being in progress of relief by the 51st Division.

On October 3rd, at a special parade, the 6th Corps Commander presented the Military Medal to the following non-commissioned officers and men of the Battalion: Sergeant W. Gregg, Sergeant D. Barron, Privates T. Rourke, T. Heron, J. Hall and J. Hunt, and on October 4th Battalion Headquarters with A and D Companies marched to Gommecourt where C Company rejoined. The Battalion was now in Army Reserve. No great distance from Gommecourt was Achiet-le-Grand with an old 8th Battalion member, Captain R. Watson, as Town Mayor.

On October 5th, owing to the dirty state of the camp, it was moved and repitched on new ground. B Company rejoined from Achiet-le-Petit.

On the 6th the Commanding Officer presented Military Medal Ribbons to those who had been awarded the medal for gallantry during the raid of September 15th, and on the following day notification was received of the award of the Military Cross to Captain B. M. Williams.

The stay at Gommecourt allowed of a pilgrimage to the Butte de Warlencourt, distant a ride of some two hours only, and accordingly one afternoon a small party set off following the road through Sapignies to Bapaume and thence along the Route Nationale leading to Albert.

Soon after leaving Bapaume the three slender crosses of this second Calvary became visible, clear against the sky, with the blurred unshapen mass of The Butte below.

Around The Butte the old trench system was now in this early October of 1917, almost hidden by the growth of rank grass and weeds.

Whilst searching amongst the trenches which still held much of the wreckage of the fighting, a number of papers were found, half buried in the ground; these had belonged to Lieutenant M. H. Kay, the Battalion signalling officer, who fell during the ill-fated attack of November 5th, 1916. As they were lying behind what had been the German front line that day, either he with others had penetrated the enemy's position or, as seems more probable, they had been taken from him where he lay later on after the attack, and being found of little or no interest thrown where they were still lying nearly a year afterwards.

Nearer to The Butte was the grave of Lieutenant Stuart of the 6th Battalion. Upon it had been placed the steel helmet on which only a short time previously he had had painted a caricature of himself. Though serving with the 6th Battalion, he belonged to Durham City, being the son of Dr. R. Stuart, and often in the days before the war turned out with the City Rugby Fifteen.

From the summit of The Butte the whole scene of the fighting of September, October and November, 1916, lay stretched out before one. Close by Eaucourt l'Abbaye was still the old tank which did such good service on October 1st, the tiny crosses of some of its crew just showing above the long grass; whilst the trench board track following its devious course past High Wood and Seven Elms to the entrance to Pioneer Alley in the old Flers line stood out so clearly in the afternoon sun that it was a matter for the greatest wonder any of the daylight reliefs such as were carried out, or even the passage of small parties along it, were ever possible under such observation as The Butte permitted to the enemy.

The return journey was made by a different route across country through the one-time villages of Warlencourt and Grevillers,

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passing through the outskirts of Loupart Wood with its many gun positions.

On October 8th the following six officers, having been cross-posted to the 6th Battalion, left to join their new unit: Lieutenants A. Green, C. G. R. Lewis, E. A. Armbrister, C. R. J. Rees, R. T. H. Eliff and B. R. Thompson.

The usual "out of the line" training was carried out and on the 10th a leap frog attack was practised by the Brigade. The day began very wet but improved, and Lieutenant-General Haldam, Commanding 6th Corps, presented Military Medals to a number of non-commissioned officers of the Brigade, which afterwards marched past. The next few days were all occupied in training and the usual routine. On the 16th preparations for a move began, and on the 17th the Battalion entrained at Bapaume for the north to join the Fifth Army.

CHAPTER X

THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES. HOUTHULST FOREST. PASSCHENDAELE

AT 7 p.m. on October 18th, Esquelbec, near to Cassel, was reached and from here the Battalion marched to billets at Zeggars Cappel, where D Company, which had remained on duty at Bapaume, rejoined. After two days here, during which Brigadier-General N. J. G. Cameron left the Brigade to take over command of the 49th Division and Brigadier-General C. Martin succeeded him, a move was made on the 20th via La Cloche to Ledinghem where the night was spent, and at 7 a.m. on the 21st, the Battalion paraded in fighting order and marched through Wormhoudt Herzeele and Houtkerque to Proven where billets near Lovie Chateau, about one thousand yards east of Proven, were occupied.

The Third Battle of Ypres, which had opened on July 31st, was still in progress, and the fighting had reached the borders of Houthulst Forest and the Passchendaele Ridge. The whole of the countryside was covered with camps, and all the roads were thronged with transport. Indeed, more troops seemed to be concentrated in this area than there were on the Somme. Bombing by enemy aircraft of the camps, roads, and towns, was incessant, and came more or less as a surprise, for there had been none around Arras, and in the congested state of the camps approaching and around Ypres seriously heavy casualties resulted from this.

On October 22nd the Battalion moved to Suez Camp near to Crombeke, in the 14th Corps Staging Area, marching with intervals of two hundred yards between Companies, and one hundred yards between every six transport vehicles in order to facilitate the passing of cross traffic on the crowded roads. Suez Camp consisted of tents in a wood, and was in a very dirty and muddled condition. The 23rd was spent in cleaning up, and on the 24th B and C Companies entrained at Proven for Boesinghe on the Yser Canal bank, and marched from there to White Mill, Elverdinghe, and Hull's Farm, near to Brielen, respectively for duty as carrying parties to the Divisional Field Companies Royal Engineers (447th, 448th, and 7th),

and later in the day further parties from A and D Companies marched to Elverdinghe to act as stretcher-bearers for the 1/1st Northumbrian Field Ambulance. Battalion Headquarters with the remainder of A and D Companies remained in Suez Camp.

On October 25th the Commanding Officer with the Company Commanders reconnoitred the forward area; on this day Captain R. H. Wharrier and one man were wounded.

The 50th Division made its entry into the fighting on October 26th, taking part in an army attack with the 149th Infantry Brigade, whilst the 150th Infantry Brigade was in support. At Suez Camp the day was spent in selecting 108 non-commissioned officers and men for the Division Depot Battalion now being formed at Bollezeele, under the command of Major J. S. McLeod, D.S.O., of the 8th Battalion, and on the 27th, Captain B. M. Williams with Second-Lieutenant R. Gillender and 70 non-commissioned officers and men left the Battalion for Bollezeele, the remainder, under Lieutenant V. McLare, following on the 30th, on which day the Battalion concentrated at Roussel Farm Camp near to Elverdinghe, where preparations for moving into the fighting were begun.

Soon after midday on November 1st the Battalion moved out of camp and entrained at Elverdinghe (the details being left behind, moving to Dragon Camp Farm) for Boesinghe, whence at 4.15 p.m. it proceeded up the trench-board track, "Railway Street," to relieve the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment in the right sub-section of the Divisional front. Railway Street ran through a terrain of countless shell-holes in a water-logged area over which progress off the trench-boards was utterly impossible. Though vivid memories of the "The Somme" still remained in the minds of most of the Battalion, the desolation of the Ypres Salient came as a shock even to those who had known it of old. Fought over so many times since 1914, these few miles of Flanders seemed gorged with the debris of war and unable any longer to hide the wreckage of this third and most destructive battle of Ypres. Half-buried tanks, tractors, and guns, immovable and abandoned, lay everywhere amid the shapeless gaping seams that once were trenches through which ran like a huge backbone the embankment of the Ypres-Roulers Railway, the only enduring features the German pill-boxes scattered here and there. Yet in and among all this, wherever a man's fancy or opportunity led him, lived, still cheerful, the British soldier, his home a shell-hole with a blanket or ground sheet for roof, sometimes not even these. Perhaps it was at dawn The Salient looked the most evil, for then a man's vitality seemed at its lowest, and as one shivered in the first chill morning air there came a stronger whiff of gas and of newly spilt blood from bodies the night had hidden, whilst all that met the eye

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was but an abomination of desolation with the smoke from some still fuming shell-crater rising up like a morning sacrifice to heaven.

“ No green thing is about and no birds wing
Alights in branches;
Time and space are steeped in a sound
That is steeped in sorrow.”

—C. Y. Rice.

Up over the Pilckem Ridge, past Iron Cross Roads, across the heavily barraged Steenbeek Valley and by Langemarcke, the vicinity of the track continuously shelled throughout, or bombed and machine-gunned by aircraft, to Pascal Farm, where guides were met, and into the line of shell-hole positions, varying from day to day in accordance with the hostile shelling (how many of these vanished and a new crater took their place, minus the garrison) and weather conditions for these were very bad, and it was difficult to find a shell-hole that was not flooded within an hour or two of occupation. Battalion and Company Headquarters were fortunate, being in pill-boxes and concreted farms. In the front line were A Company, under Captain G. D. Gould, and C Company, under Lieutenant J. F. Hobson, with joint Headquarters at “ The Station ”; B Company, under Lieutenant G. D. Dodds, in support in and around Tranquille House, D Company, under Captain W. Johnson, in reserve at Taube Farm. The reserve Company lay actually nearer the two front line Companies than the support Company owing to the impossibility of reaching the front line around the Brombeek Valley, except via Tranquille Farm, which, therefore, became of necessity the support position. Battalion Headquarters occupied Egypt House.

From the front line, which consisted of nine posts, nothing could be seen of the enemy's position, the only objects visible in the landscape of mud and shell-holes being the shattered trees where Houthulst Forest lay, and the concreted farms and pill-boxes of Staden on the rising ground to the north-west.

The relief passed without incident except for delay in drawing water and Lewis guns from Brigade Headquarters at Martin's Mill in Langemarcke, which was barraged for a time, and extraordinary though it was under the conditions, no casualties were suffered. Several reliefs were in progress at the same time, the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) and the 5th Battalion Border Regiment between them relieving the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the left, whilst the 171st Infantry Brigade (57th Division) relieved the 152nd on the right.

During the night 1st/2nd November patrols were sent out, but the Brombeek Valley was too boggy for them to make any effective progress. The 2nd was a comparatively quiet day except for

intermittently heavy shelling of the back areas and desultory shelling of the pill-boxes, but the track from Pascal Farm to Brigade Headquarters was very heavily shelled all day. In the evening the shelling of the back areas and roads became very intense, and many gas shells were used, making the work of the transport very difficult and dangerous. During the afternoon the transport brought hot tea and soup to Brigade Headquarters, and after dusk this was carried forward by D Company to each of the Company Headquarters whence it was distributed, and again in the evening brought rations and water up to an advance dump where these were collected and distributed by B and D Companies. Patrols again attempted to reconnoitre the ground towards the enemy during the night, but found the boggy ground an insuperable obstacle; no enemy movement was observed, and no hostile patrols were met. D Company succeeded in occupying a pill-box covering the right bank of the Brombeek, and in gaining touch with the 7th Battalion the King's Liverpool Regiment on the right.

On November 3rd the day was spent improving the posts as far as was possible without drawing the attention of the enemy. German aeroplanes were very active, firing at the pill-boxes and any movements in the open. One plane flew very low over the position without firing, the observer waving his hands as he passed above the shell-holes with the object of inducing the garrisons of the posts to expose themselves and thus give their positions away when the plane immediately returned and opened fire on them. After this had happened on a few occasions two Stokes mortars were moved forward into shell-holes, and these very successfully put an end to any repetition of the performance. The resumption of the attack on Passchendaele on the right brought down a very heavy barrage over the Battalion area chiefly from guns in Houthulst Forest, which continued active all day. Casualties, amounting to one other rank killed, and one wounded, were very light in view of the intensity of the shelling. About 7.30 p.m. a gas alarm on the left of the Divisional front caused an S.O.S. to be sent up on both flanks, and although the resultant artillery activity lasted for nearly two hours, no casualties were suffered, though Battalion and Company Headquarters were plastered with gas shells. Lieutenants l'Anson and Stephenson made determined attempts to get through the swampy ground with patrols without success. There were still no signs of any enemy movement during the night, but the carrying parties with rations were unfortunate, losing one man killed and four wounded.

On November 4th, the third day in the line, there was heavy artillery fire on the whole of the Corps front, but very little retaliation on the part of the enemy. Movement along the tracks was

almost impossible owing to low-flying enemy aeroplanes which machine-gunned and bombed them all day. After dusk the front line Companies were relieved by B and D Companies, and the wiring of the Brombeek Valley was begun. Patrols went out as usual, but nothing was seen. Sergeant McManus, however, pushed out alone from his patrol to the right flank and reached a post of the 2/10th King's Liverpool Regiment. There was much shelling throughout the night with chemical shells, and six men were wounded.

November 5th was very wet, and an uncomfortable day throughout. The front line, evidently revealed by the wire put out the previous night, was shelled, and a direct hit upon one of D Company's posts caused six casualties, one man being killed, and five wounded. The total casualties for the day amounted to one killed, twelve wounded; of these, however, six were gassed who remained at duty. An officer's patrol proceeded to Gravel Farm, got into touch with the 2/4th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment, and located its posts. At night the wiring in of the front line was continued.

Preparations for relief were begun on the following day when parties of the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) came up in advance to learn the dispositions. For three-quarters of an hour in the early morning an S.O.S. line barrage was carried out by the artillery in which all the machine-guns co-operated. The enemy's response was very slight, but their aircraft were again very troublesome. In the evening the 9th Battalion in the left sub-section, after relief there by the 8th Battalion Suffolk Regiment (53rd Infantry Brigade, 18th Division) side-stepped, and together with the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, took over the Battalion position. This move was completed without casualties by 9.50 p.m., and the Battalion moved down Railway Street to Marsouin Camp, situated on the Pilckem Ridge, where it arrived at 2 a.m. on the 7th. Throughout the progress of the relief both Railway Street and the Canal Bank at Boesinghe were continually bombed by the enemy aircraft.

The total casualties suffered between November 1st and 6th amounted to 4 killed, 23 wounded, 6 gassed. The Battalion indeed was fortunate to escape so lightly even though the condition of the ground made an infantry action impossible. Losses would have been heavy had not the Germans concentrated upon the back areas and known Headquarters and all old pill-boxes, particularly Tranquille House and Taube Farm, leaving the posts more or less unmolested. Probably the uncertainty as to the exact position of their own infantry dictated this course.

For those of the Battalion who had taken part in the Second Battle of Ypres of April and May, 1915, it was strange to think of that early fighting only a few thousand yards away to the right beyond

the railway on which they watched the Germans detraining on April 25th, and to see the changed conditions both of warfare itself and the countryside from which practically all landmarks had vanished.

The "pill-boxes" which were scattered broadcast over the area, dominating all approaches, constituted a system of defence developed by the Germans to meet the introduction of the "creeping barrage" of the artillery which was the chief cause of the victory of the Messines Ridge on June 7th, 1917, in which the attacking forces suffered practically no casualties. These pill-boxes of reinforced concrete were sufficiently strong to withstand even direct hits, and their garrisons survived after the barrage had passed over them, with the result that the greater part of the 600,000 casualties suffered by the British Forces in Flanders during the three months from July 31st to October 31st was due to the machine-gun fire of these. Nearly the whole of the British Army took part in this Third Battle of Ypres. As a result of this system of defence changes in the tactics of attack were developed, and the fighting became more like open warfare as the Germans did not, after the first lines facing Ypres, hold trench positions but defensive zones about fifteen hundred yards in depth with the pill-boxes in irregular groups throughout each zone, and mopping up of trenches gave place to mopping up of areas. With regard to these pill-boxes, however, a circumstance arose, aiding in their capture, which could never have been foreseen. This was the gradual burying of them in some cases, and the blocking of the loopholes by the earth thrown up by the terrific shell-fire. The construction of the loopholes, too, was faulty in that they made it impossible for the garrison to depress their machine-guns sufficiently to cover the ground nearby, and men could, therefore, creep up under them and bomb through the apertures. After capture they afforded the same protection to the attackers who, by their means, were able to ward off counter-attacks and hold on to the positions they had taken.

Marsouin Camp, a camp only in name and indistinguishable from the surrounding desolation, was in a very exposed position on a ridge about fifteen hundred yards west of the Yser Canal. Fortunately the stay here was only of one day's duration, and early on the morning of November 8th, the Battalion moved back to Roussel Farm. Though, of course, no comparison can be drawn between the camps and the front line, life in the camps anywhere within the Ypres area was rendered very uncertain by the continual bombing from the air each night. In this respect the Battalion was, however, fortunate to escape casualties, whilst others, particularly the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) and 5th Battalion Border Regiment as well as Brigade Headquarters, suffered somewhat severely. It was with no regrets, therefore, that preparations for a move to a rest area around

Eperlecques were begun on the 9th, on which day part of the transport and a billeting party departed, followed on the 10th by the Battalion which entrained at Elverdinghe for Watten. There was some delay at the entraining point, and many anxiously watched the horizon for sign of German aircraft, but possibly owing to the rain, none appeared, and eventually the train arrived and was soon off again. It was after 5 p.m. when Watten was reached from where the Battalion marched to very excellent billets at Mouille, a village astride the main road by St. Omer to Calais. The transport, which had moved by road through Proven, Wormhoudt, Ledinghem, Arneke, Buysdere, St. Momelin-le-Bas and Serques, did not arrive until the 11th.

After a day spent in settling down training, as usual, began, which occupied the mornings only, the afternoons being devoted to recreation, on the organization of which much stress was laid. Both Divisional, Brigade and Inter-Company football competitions were held. In the former the Battalion lost to the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment by 2 goals to 1, and in the Brigade competition again lost to the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) by 3 to 2. Both were hard, fast games where the losing side gained as much credit as the winners. The great event, however, of this rest was the Brigade cross-country run of about three and a half miles, in which it was compulsory for every unit in the Brigade group, which included besides the four Battalions, the Brigade Machine-Gun Company, Brigade Headquarters, a Field Company Royal Engineers, the Brigade Company of the Divisional Train Army Service Corps, and the 2/2nd Northumbrian Field Ambulance. As the points were affected by the proportion of starters to the ration strength of each unit, practically every officer and man turned out. The units were formed up in column of route in a large field, and started by the firing of a rifle. There was only one exit, and looking back from the top of a ridge a good mile from the starting point, the leaders could see large numbers still striving to make their way out. In spite of this a great many completed the course, the first man home belonging to the Machine-Gun Company, closely followed by another man of that Company, members of the 6th Battalion and Brigade Headquarters filling the third and fourth places respectively. The 6th Battalion were the eventual winners. The local inhabitants gazed in astonishment, and the Brigade interpreter reported that they considered the English quite mad. So far as the serious side of the training was concerned this was chiefly confined to musketry in the Carre de Marne, for most of the surrounding countryside was under cultivation, and the first stages of a competition, under the auspices of the Army Rifle Association, were fired. Intensive digging of trenches was practised frequently.

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This was considered a very important part of training as will be gathered from the following extract of a letter written by Lieutenant-General Sir Ivor Maxse, commanding the 18th Corps. After a brief discourse on the necessity for intensive spade work he concluded his letter with the remark "No dig, no dec.," and in a postscript added "N.B.—Dec. is short for decoration," this having reference to the many "buckshee," as they were called, decorations being awarded at that period of the war as apart from those gained by gallantry in action.

On November 28th Major P. Kirkup, who was in command of the Battalion during the absence of Lieutenant-Colonel Martin on leave, proceeded to a Staff and Commanding Officers' Conference at the 18th Corps School at Bollezele. This conference, which lasted until December 1st, was both instructive and entertaining. Excellent billets in the village and a good mess at the school were provided, indeed the Corps Commander spared nothing to make the conference a success. The business side consisted of lectures by Lieutenant-General Sir Ivor Maxse and his "show-man" Lieutenant-Colonel Levey, intermingled with demonstrations by the members of the various Depot Battalions stationed at the school, and in connection with one of these, a demonstration of how sentries should perform their duties, attention was called by one of the commanding officers watching to one of the guards over a number of German prisoners who were working in the vicinity, and who, with his rifle slung over his shoulder, his hands in his pockets, and a cigarette in his mouth, appeared to be enjoying life to the utmost. After the just completed illustration of how these things ought to be done, even the Corps Commander saw the humorous side of it and refrained from "strafing" very severely. On the last evening of the conference some hint was given as to the future destinations of the Divisions represented, and during a hand of Bridge some commanding officers of a London Division were heard to remark that the 50th Division was for trouble on the return to the line as it was to hold Passchendaele. As things turned out later, however, Passchendaele rather belied its reputation, whilst the London Division, which took over the sector towards Houthulst, came in for a very uncomfortable time, and was raided. Still that was in the future, and for a time at least the expectations of the next few weeks did not hold out much cheer.

Lieutenant-Colonel Martin returned from leave on November 30th, and on December 2nd presented Military Medal Ribbons to Sergeant E. Emmerson and Corporal T. Murphy, and on the 4th the 50th Division routine orders contained the following announcement: "The following Officer has been noted at General Headquarters for

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Mention in a future Honours Despatch for Distinguished Conduct in the Field during Active Operations: Lieutenant N. Clark, 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry."

On December 10th the Commanding Officer, together with the Company Commanders, proceeded to reconnoitre the forward area. Two days later the 50th Division relieved the 30th, and the 151st Infantry Brigade moved to the Brandhoek area where the Battalion occupied St. Lawrence Camp. This huddled camp lay on the opposite side of the Poperinghe-Vlamertinghe road to the woods in which the Battalion had bivouacked in the May of 1915. As the bombing of the camps still continued, the next few days were spent in improving St. Lawrence Camp and protecting the huts by the building of sand-bag parapets round them, till on the 17th the Battalion, less 105 men, who were working for the Royal Engineers, proceeded by bus through Ypres to the junction of the Menin and Potijze roads a few hundred yards beyond the Menin Gate. The accommodation here, which consisted of cellars, a few tents, and some bivouac shelters, was very poor. Here a stay was made until the 19th when, all working parties having rejoined, at 1.30 p.m. Battalion Headquarters with two Companies moved forward into close support, relieving two Companies of the 4th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, Headquarters being in Irksome Pill-box. The relief passed quietly without any shelling of the area until the evening, when it became intermittent, mostly with 5.9's, though about twenty gas shells fell around Headquarters. The ground was covered with slight snow which had fallen on the 16th, and a hard frost having set in afterwards, movement was easy.

To those few still with the Battalion in December, 1917, who had in the April of 1915 passed up the road from Ypres to Zonnebeke and on to the Grafenstafel Ridge the way was barely recognizable. A few of the buildings that had once formed the village of Potijze yet remained, bare walls, some little more than a few feet above their foundations. Gone at last was the Calvary which for so long had stood by the cross-roads at the southern entrance to the village. Of the "White Chateau" of many memories only the outline was traceable, and but a few yards away had grown bit by bit a small collection of graves, amongst which were those of Lieutenant J. R. Brass and others of the Battalion who, wounded or gassed in the fighting of April, 1915, had died in the chateau dressing-station.

Farther on, of Velorenhoek, the iron gate of Mill Cot, half buried in a heap of rubble, alone remained a visible sign of the village to which the remnant of the Battalion was withdrawn on April 27th. Of Mill Cot as it was in 1915, one memory remains, a red brick built house separated from the road by a garden, surrounded by Canadian

soldiers and a party with fixed bayonets demanding an entrance in search of a spy.

From Velorenhoeck the road continued through an utterly unrecognizable terrain. Except for the rising ground and the few remaining signs of where the railway had once crossed the road beyond the village, the site of Frezenberg would have been impossible of identification, for no stick or stone remained, and in its place a long row of 60-pounders showed their muzzles above the ridge.

The railway embankment alongside which the Battalion had passed after leaving the road at the crossing on the night of April 24th, 1915, still remained, scarred and torn, and now the Mule Track, a sleeper-built road, ran where had then been the narrow pathway leading to Zonnebeke station; of Zonnebeke the only trace being the fallen stones of its church still showing, in an aeroplane photograph, as they lay, in the form of a huge cross.

Nothing remained of the road from Zonnebeke along which in early dawn of the 25th the march of the Battalion was continued. So pulverized was the ground by the shell-fire of the Third Battle of Ypres that it was not even possible to distinguish what had been macadam from the softer grounds of the bordering fields through which the road had passed. In searching for traces one found here and there a row of a few splintered stumps of a hedge which served as a guide, and farther on lay the evil Kansas Cross-Roads (so named in 1917) where the Battalion had left the road and climbed the hill to Boetleer's Farm.

And all around only shell-hole touching shell-hole mile after mile, each depression a swamp, gaunt ridges rising one after another to the heights of Passchendaele, marked by fang-like tree trunks and the huge grey blocks of the captured German pill-boxes.

In the midst of all this were spent most of the winter months of December, 1917, January and February, 1918. The front line a series of shell-hole posts in which movement by day was impossible and by night afforded little more than the stretching of one's cramped limbs. The support position shell-holes again for shelter, though here the confinement was less severe. Almost incessant shelling, alternate rain, frost or fog. Continuous work on the defences. Heavy carrying day and night. Added to which were the long miles to be travelled, when the light railway was not available, to and from the line, and as often happened within five or six hours of being relieved and the weary struggle back to Ypres or the camps around Potijze, all available personnel had to be marched up again almost into the line itself to assist the engineers in their labours on the successive defensive lines being constructed with all haste. The strain this entailed was, of course, realized, and was met by the arrangement

whereby a Division spent a month in the line and a month well back from the fighting zone in resting and recreation.

On December 20th, in a dense fog, the Battalion moved into the front line, with Headquarters in Hamburg Pill-box. The position held consisted of small posts, mostly in shell-holes, and ran from in front of about the centre of the ruins on the eastern edge of Passchendaele along the ridge to the south of the village. There was intermittent shelling which increased towards night. On the morning of the 21st the fog still continued and there was no visibility, but enemy machine-guns were located near the gasometer firing occasional bursts. A patrol from No. 4 Post, on the right, went out and heard sounds of digging near the road running from Passchendaele to the station on D Company's front, and throughout the day work on the consolidation of shell-holes was continued and wherever possible guide-tapes laid to the posts. After dark patrols reported no signs of the enemy except that voices were heard near to where the sounds of digging had been located during the day.

The enemy artillery, assisted by observation balloons and aircraft, was very active all through the 22nd, the fog having cleared, and carried out an area shoot on both front and support lines in the morning but without causing any casualties. Between 4.30 and 5.10 p.m. an intense barrage was put down following the firing of an S.O.S. on the left of the Divisional front.

Before dawn on the 23rd patrols established touch with the Battalions on the flanks and found the Battalion front clear up to one hundred and fifty yards. At 8.30 a.m. the support area was barraged by guns, principally firing from Moorslede. The morning was very bright, with good visibility, and the enemy's artillery fire was consequently very great. During the afternoon a British aeroplane, flying very low, not more than about one hundred and fifty feet up, crossed the line, flying in the direction of the enemy. This had hardly cleared the position when it was observed to burst into flames and fall. Efforts made to reach it were stopped by machine-gun fire, and it was not till after dark that a patrol, under Lieutenants Blair and Smith, were able to approach the wreckage. They succeeded in obtaining some personal effects and salvaging two Lewis guns, but the pilot and observer were both found dead and severely burnt under the machine.

There was a thick ground fog again on the 24th, and after a quiet day in consequence, the Battalion was relieved at 4.30 p.m. by the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment, and on completion of this Companies moved independently by platoons to Whitby Camp at Potijze where all were assembled by 9 p.m. The following day, Christmas Day, a return was made to St. Lawrence Camp, Brandhoek, by bus,

and owing to the move it was decided to hold over the intended festivities until the 26th, when a very enjoyable time was spent. A special dinner was arranged, part of the cost of which was defrayed by the £25 received from the officer commanding the 25th Reserve Battalion at home. In the evening the Brigade Commander dined with the officers.

On December 27th Major-General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, commanding the 8th Corps, visited the Brigade, and after inspecting the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) went round the lines of each Battalion and addressed various groups of the men. "Hunter Bunter," as he was popularly called, spent a considerable amount of time with the 8th Battalion, and if his remarks were not all complimentary they were well meant, and taken in that spirit. He showed a remarkable knowledge of the details of a Battalion's paraphernalia and the insides of field kitchens and water-carts, and appeared delighted when anyone failed to answer his questions on such matters. The transport, however, pleased him greatly, for Lieutenant N. Clark, after being asked by the Corps Commander if he knew anything about horses, met him on his own ground and quite defeated the General who remarked as he left: "Now, that is the sort of officer I like." The Sergeant cook was not quite so successful, for after the inspection of the field kitchens which, owing to the move, the Christmas festivities with their after-effect, and the visit of the Corps Commander being something in the nature of a surprise, with little time for any "eye-wash," had not recovered from their sojourn at Potijze, the General turned to Lieutenant-Colonel Martin, saying: "I congratulate you, Martin, I congratulate you on having the dirtiest field kitchens I ever saw in my life." "Jock" Martin's face was worth more than a glance. Major P. Kirkup now left the Battalion to attend the Senior Officers' School at Aldershot and Captain W. Johnson thereupon assumed the duties of Second-in-Command.

On December 28th the Battalion moved off once more for the line and as on the previous occasion was conveyed by buses to the Potijze cross-roads, and after dinner in the Seaham staging-camp, proceeded in parties of six to eight men up to the Seine area of the Passchendaele sector where it came under the orders of the 149th Infantry Brigade, which was holding the line, and became intermediate support Battalion. The move was without incident other than as Lieutenant-Colonel Martin was unable to get through the narrow entrance into the pill-box allotted for Headquarters these had to be content with a much less desirable residence.

Though the area was shelled during the evening no casualties were suffered. The Companies were scattered about in shell-holes roofed in with "Baby Elephants" and other material in an area of

about a hundred square yards to the immediate west of Battalion Headquarters. The weather still continued frosty and very cold, but as cooking was possible this was minimized to some extent by hot food and drinks. The 29th passed very quietly, the Companies being employed wiring the Bellevue Switch and carrying Royal Engineers' material to Crest Farm for the 171st Tunnelling Company Royal Engineers which was engaged on the defences of the Corps line which ran immediately in the rear of the front line system. There was intermittent shelling again without inflicting casualties.

The 30th opened still frosty, but a thaw set in during the afternoon. Work as on the previous day was continued until evening, when the Battalion was relieved by the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.), and after completion of its work for the Tunnelling Company moved down from the forward area into Whitby Camp. Though the conditions of the last three days had been very trying there had been no casualties, but twenty cases of incipient "trench feet" had occurred.

The early morning of the 31st was actually less peaceful than the forward area had been, for the whole of the camp and its vicinity were heavily shelled and bombed; still there were no casualties and so the last day of 1917, another milestone in the progress of the war, passed. At 12 midnight messages of greeting were sent to Division, Brigade and the other Battalions, also to Major-General N. J. G. Cameron now commanding the 49th Division in the sector adjoining the 50th Division.

The dawn of the New Year, the third since the entry of the Battalion into the Western theatre of war, found the 151st Infantry Brigade holding the support position of the Divisional front at Passchendaele. The Battalion on January 1st, 1918, was still in occupation of Whitby Camp, but during the afternoon moved up into the Hamburg area as close support Battalion with Headquarters once more in the Irksome Pill-box, relieving the 5th Battalion Border Regiment which thereupon took over the front line on the left of the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.), so that the Brigade then held the Passchendaele sector and the support position was taken over by another Brigade. The relief was complete by 4.25 p.m.

From the Passchendaele Ridge one looked down upon the Grafenstafel Ridge with its memories of April, 1915, and also the scene of the gallant reinforcement of the 3rd Royal Fusiliers near to Railway Wood in the May of the same year. Both are now utterly unrecognizable to the ordinary glance and only to be definitely picked out from the surrounding ground with the help of a map.

The British front was now one hundred and twenty-five miles in extent.

In spite of the Somme, the Battle of Arras and the Third Battle of

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Ypres of the past two years, there was yet no apparent sign of an end to the war. Though driven from his last stronghold on the ridges overlooking Ypres no permanent advantage seemed to have accrued, and now that owing to the collapse of the Russian Armies on the Eastern front some forty German Divisions had been set free for service on the Western front, the immediate future held much uncertainty. Even at this time there was under consideration the possibility of having to withdraw from Passchendaele eventually, and work was being pushed on hurriedly upon the "Army Line" in the rear to which a retirement was to be made in certain eventualities, so that it cannot be said the outlook in January, 1918, was in any way promising. In spite of this there was no doubt ever expressed as to the ultimate result, and the men, though war-worn, never lost their cheerfulness and groused in the same healthy spirit as ever.

The Hamburg area lying on the western slopes of the Passchendaele Ridge, as when previously occupied by the Battalion, was not seriously troubled by shell-fire with the exception of one day, January 3rd, when about two thousand shells of 5.9 and 4.5 calibre fell around it. In spite of this absolute storm of fire there was not a single casualty. The War Diary remarks that as a certain amount of cooking was practicable here, this added a little to the comfort of the men. Comfort! Imagine if you can what there could be in the way of this for men living as these were. Their abodes shell-holes, impossible of drainage, consolidated according to the latest ideas, slits cut in the sides to sit in with a rough revetment to hold the crumbling slopes of the hole which nevertheless slithered down to form a varying depth of slime rising above what floor-boards it was possible to fix, and for roof a ground sheet. Their outlook for days the broken black edges of the surrounding ridges with a few gaunt skeletons of what once were trees standing out against a winter sky, the huge bulk of some old German pill-box, and Tyne Cot with its few score of sad little crosses. Some days not even these, only an impenetrable wall of fog which hid even the neighbouring post perhaps but five or six yards distant and, which was a mercy, some nearby water-logged shell-hole still garrisoned by the dead body of a German for all were not yet buried, there was more pressing work to be done for the safety of the living. Muddled, numb with wet and cold, their days spent in the carrying of heavy timber, screw pickets and barbed wire for the defences of Crest Farm and the Haalen Switch; their nights in bearing rations to the men in the front line posts just over the ridge and over all the enduring of shell-fire or the ever present threat of it. Yet merely to be alive and have food to eat was something to be thankful for. And letters from home!

Here the battalion was employed in work on the defences and in

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carrying of rations at night to the two Battalions in the front line until January 4th, when it was relieved by the 2nd Battalion Welsh Fusiliers of the 19th Brigade, 33rd Division, and returned to Whitby Camp for the night.

Another rest being now due, an advance party left on the 5th to take over billets in the Steenvoorde area, followed on the 6th by the Battalion which embussed in the Grande Place of Ypres. From this it will be gathered that Ypres at this time was fairly quiet. As a matter of fact it was much more desirable as a place of residence than the surrounding camps, for it was but rarely shelled or bombed now, and its many cellars, now organized and fitted out as shelters for troops, were so protected by the amount of fallen masonry covering them as to afford a maximum of safety and comfort. Of the Cloth Hall little was left save one pinnacle at the eastern end which still stood almost unharmed, like an accusing finger, and the base of the tower, the interior of which, one of the safest places in Ypres, had been furnished and fitted out and here all the padres of the Brigades in the line had their dwelling-place.

Eecke, in the Steenvoorde area, was reached at 12.30 p.m. and here very scattered billets were found, only Battalion Headquarters being in the village itself. For the sixteen days which followed the weather was bitterly cold with much frost and snow.

On January 10th a draft of 74 other ranks arrived from England, together with Captain R. H. Guest Williams, now recovered from his wound of September 29th, 1916, and Captain H. J. Mowlam, who was serving with the Battalion at the outbreak of the war but had been retained in England.

An inspection of the transport of the Brigade, together with a competition, was held on the 14th, when the Battalion was awarded the following prizes for turn-outs: field kitchen, first; water-cart, equal first with 6th Battalion; mess cart, second. The pack animals were highly commended. The "Jesmond Jesters" were again in being and Companies attended their performances each evening in Steenvoorde.

On the 17th the Brigade left Eecke for the Boisdingham area, the Battalion moving off from its billets, which were handed over to the 2nd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment at 4.30 p.m. to entrain at Caestre. Owing to some trouble on the line the train did not arrive till 8 p.m. and it was 10.45 p.m. before Wizernes, where detrainment took place, was reached. Then there was a tiring march, in rain, over very bad roads which in places were almost impassable to transport, to Moringhem where the Battalion arrived between 2 and 3 a.m. on the 18th. As in addition to full marching order each man carried one blanket, the whole move proved very trying. The billets were poor and the motor transport arrangements broke down so that it was not

till 5 a.m. that the stores arrived and all got settled in. Battalion Headquarters with its details and D Company were in Moringhem, A Company in Grand Diques, B and C Companies in Petit Diques.

The training area proved to be very good, and part of this was prepared later to represent Passchendaele Ridge. Like all "rests," the days were spent in a variety of training which included a scheme wherein the Battalion occupied the position of a support Battalion in the specially laid-out Passchendaele sector and carried out the action required in the event of an enemy attack on the actual defences of Passchendaele. Other practical training consisted of practice in the consolidation and concealment of shell-holes, these being made for the purpose by the 151st Trench Mortar Battery. On January 24th the positions as in the front line at Passchendaele were occupied by the Companies and inspected by the Brigade Commander, during which exercise aeroplanes from a neighbouring squadron gave a demonstration and took photographs of the position. Again on the 26th the Battalion held the model Passchendaele Ridge, whilst the 5th Battalion Border Regiment represented the enemy and attacked, capturing Passchendaele Church, but being held up at Crest Farm by B Company. Platoons from each of the Companies then counter-attacked, whilst the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) advanced under cover of a smoke screen and successfully restored the line, the object of the exercise being to test the Brigade defence scheme for such an eventuality. Altogether the training proved the most interesting of any.

During the rest Captain D. Gillespie, Royal Army Medical Corps, left the Battalion for duty with the Divisional Engineers and was succeeded as Medical Officer by Captain Lindsay, Royal Army Medical Corps.

The last three or four days of January were occupied in preparations for a return to Passchendaele, and on the 30th the Battalion moved off at 7.25 a.m. to Wizernes, where it entrained soon after 10 a.m. and at 2 p.m. reached Brandhoek, once more occupying St. Lawrence Camp which was taken over from the 4th Battalion Suffolk Regiment (33rd Division). Here it remained until February 3rd, then moving forward into Whitby Camp, Potijze. Second-Lieutenant A. G. N. Green rejoined from hospital during this time and Captain J. H. Burrell having been attached to Brigade Headquarters, the appointment of Adjutant was taken over during his temporary absence by Lieutenant J. Hutchinson. A very popular promotion to commissioned rank at this time was that of Acting Regimental Sergeant-Major M. A. Smith, who was granted a commission in the Durham Light Infantry and retained with the Battalion by specially expressed desire.

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On February 4th the Battalion moved up into Brigade Reserve in the Seine area of the Passchendaele sector in relief of the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, the relief, which was very quiet, being complete by 6 p.m. On the following day parties from each Company proceeded to the front line held at the time by the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment to take over the respective Company areas. Lieutenant J. R. Barr, of C Company, was slightly wounded whilst proceeding to his Company position. After dusk on the 6th the Battalion moved up and took over the line with Headquarters in Indigo Pill-box. During this tour of the line an adjustment of the sector was made between the 151st and 86th Infantry Brigades, and in consequence D Company on the left handed over its two extreme left posts to the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) whilst at the same time A Company extended its left to take over posts on that flank. No Man's Land, which was in a water-logged condition, was found by patrols to be entirely free of the enemy and the whole situation was very quiet, with little shelling and practically no aerial activity until the 8th, when a Company of the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) relieved C and D Companies which moved back to the Haarlen Switch and Crest Farm respectively, and a Company of the 5th Battalion Border Regiment relieved A Company which thereupon occupied part of the Hamburg support area. B Company remained in the Passchendaele road in support. These dispositions were held until dusk on the 9th, when the whole position was taken over by the 5th Battalion Border Regiment and the Companies marched independently to St. Jean Camp, Potijze, practically on the site occupied by the first line transport in April, 1915. During the progress of the relief, whilst the Battalion stores were being loaded on the transport at Seine Dump, the enemy began to shell the dump heavily and the first salvo wounded four men of the transport and one horse. Lance-Corporal T. Surtees, the non-commissioned officer in charge, realizing the critical situation, at once rode to the dump, inyoked the wounded animal, replacing it with his own and succeeded in getting the wounded men and the whole of the transport away without further casualties. Lance-Sergeant R. Wears remained at the dump in spite of the shell-fire till he had seen all stores removed and then intercepted D Company on its way down after relief in time to divert it down Judah Track. For their gallantry Lance-Corporal Surtees was awarded the Military Medal and received the congratulations of the Corps Commander, and Lance-Sergeant Wears was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal. The Battalion was relieved just in time to escape an unpleasant and unfortunate incident which instead befell the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.). On the evening of the day following the relief a party of about eight Germans surprised a ration carrying party of that Battalion with the result that the officer in charge

was wounded and one man taken prisoner. It was never made clear how they managed to penetrate between the posts of the front line, but that they did so was a fact, for the ration party at the time it was attacked had not reached the front line.

Whilst the Battalion was in St. Jean Camp a change took place in the composition of the 151st Infantry Brigade. Just at this time Brigades were being reduced from four to three Battalions. On the 11th February the 5th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel G. O. Spence, was transferred from the 150th Infantry Brigade to the 151st, and on the 12th the 9th Battalion (D.L.I.) left to become the Pioneer Battalion of the 62nd Division, followed on the 13th by the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, which proceeded to join the 66th Division also as a Pioneer Battalion, and so a long and happy association ended. The 151st Infantry Brigade then consisted of the 5th, 6th and 8th Battalions The Durham Light Infantry.

The Battalion remained in St. Jean Camp until February 14th, and during this period Company Sergeant-Major E. Wise was appointed Acting Regimental Sergeant-Major.

On the 14th the Battalion again took over the front line, relieving the 4th Battalion Yorkshire Regiment with Headquarters as before in Indigo Pill-box, and marked the return to the line by the capture near one of the posts of a German belonging to the 31st Division, which he stated had recently come from the Russian front.

A very hard frost had now set in and No Man's Land became passable to troops in parts. Increased vigilance was therefore necessary and patrols were constantly out. On the night 14/15th February Captain R. H. Wharrier took out two patrols and reconnoitred the vicinity of Grun, where traces of enemy work were discovered. Second-Lieutenant R. D. Harrison reconnoitred Tiber whilst Second-Lieutenant H. l'Anson patrolled as far as Detect Crossing. The patrol at Tiber saw an enemy patrol, but no action ensued. A German non-commissioned officer, however, was captured near to No. 4 Post, into whose garrison he walked and was taken by Sergeant Ashton of A Company. He had formed one of a patrol of seven who were scattered by the fire from the post and he then lost his way. Through him the enemy opposed to the Battalion was identified as the 70th R.I.R. (Prussian) which had relieved the sector the previous night.

At this time a new idea on the part of the 8th Corps Commander was in vogue, "Visualizing," and dire was the result not only to the individual himself, but also to his immediate superiors, even to the Brigade Commander, who was unable to give a correct description of every feature of country opposite his position whilst his back was

turned to it when the Corps Commander paid a visit to the sector, for he did so on more than one occasion, even going so far once as to sit in an elevated position upon the ruins of Passchendaele Church much to the dismay of those whose fortune it was to have to reside in its vicinity whilst he did not.

The frost continued with good visibility during the day, and there was consequently increased artillery and aerial activity on the part of both sides. On the 16th two men were wounded by shell-fire, and on the 17th one man was killed and two wounded by a direct hit on a shelter. Three other casualties occurred on the 18th, on the evening of which day the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment took over and the Battalion's defence of Passchendaele became a thing of the past without any regret. After relief the Battalion was conveyed by the light railway from Borry Farm to Ypres, where not uncomfortable billets in cellars were occupied around the old infantry barracks.

On February 20th the Battalion entrained at 1.35 p.m. in the restored Ypres railway station, and at 5.30 p.m. arrived at Wizernes, marching from there to billets, which were good though dirty, at St. Martin-au-Laert, a suburb of St. Omer. Then began the usual rest routine of "cleaning up" and training. On the 23rd Lieutenant J. F. Hobson took over the duties of Battalion Transport Officer vice Lieutenant N. Clark who had been appointed Brigade Transport Officer.

The days passed on with little of interest until the 7th of March when, whilst the Brigade Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel G. O. Spence, who was acting in the absence of Brigadier-General C. Martin on leave, was dining with the Battalion, a sudden warning order for a move arrived, and on the following day the whole Brigade entrained at Arques for Longeau, near to Amiens, to join the Fifth Army. At a siding in the station of Longeau when the Battalion arrived there on March 9th was the special train of the Commander-in-Chief. The sudden move of the 50th Division was thus explained and it became clear that the anticipated German Offensive was at last localized and known to be pending on the fronts of the Third and Fifth Armies.

CHAPTER XI

THE RETREAT OF THE FIFTH ARMY. ST. QUENTIN TO AMIENS

THE two days following the move from the Wizernes area were spent by the Battalion at Corbie, a most picturesque little town near to the junction of the River Ancre with the Somme a few miles from Amiens. Early on the morning of March 11th the Brigade was moved somewhat nearer to the line and both the 6th and 8th Battalions were billeted in Marcelcave, where, as Brigade Headquarters, and for a few days half the 7th Battalion also occupied accommodation, this was severely tested and consequently lacked the comfort the fairly good billets would otherwise have afforded. The village lay a short distance south of the main Amiens-Péronne road and roughly about three miles east of Villers-Bretonneux.

On March 13th all the Commanding Officers, together with the Brigade Commander, visited the line for the purpose of reconnoitring the positions and approaches in preparation for the eventuality of these having to be occupied at short notice, and a day or two later all Company Commanders carried out the same precautionary reconnaissance of the forward zone.

The final Brigade stage of the Army Rifle Association Competition, which had been begun during an earlier rest, was fired off on March 17th and won by the 8th Battalion platoon which scored 203 points against 174 by the 6th and 119 by the 5th Battalion, each member of the team thereby being awarded the A.R.A. Bronze Medal. Ere these were received for presentation but few, alas, of the platoon remained.

A somewhat interesting and amusing incident which occurred in Marcelcave during this time was the marriage of a French officer *permissionnaire*. After the ceremony the happy pair, together with their friends, paraded the entire village, kissing all the old inhabitants on the way. The bridegroom was really a fine-looking man, but his bride had obviously seen many summers and her bows and grimaces—they could hardly be termed smiles—caused much amusement amongst the troops who looked on.

The 151st Infantry Brigade was still in Army Reserve in Marcelcave when during the early hours of Thursday, March 21st, an intense bombardment broke out. Preparations for an immediate move were at once made, but it was nearly 5 p.m. before orders were received by the Battalion for entrainment at Guillaucourt at 6 p.m. As this was quite an hour's march distant, no time was lost in moving off. A wearisome journey followed in the usual horse-boxes, and though the distance was not great it was almost 11 p.m. before Brie was reached, where detrainment took place near to the bridges crossing the Somme. From this point the march forward began along roads much impeded by retiring artillery and other units. It was a damp, cheerless night, and the moon, which was too young to give any effective light, soon set, leaving the country intensely dark. Eventually the village of Brusle was reached where, on open ground to the south-east of the village, the Battalion bivouacked for the night. As all transport had been ordered to remain west of the Somme, the only food available was that doubtful supply, "the unconsumed portion of the previous day's ration carried on the man," and daybreak on the 22nd found a very hungry Battalion in a country obscured by a dense fog through which came the sounds of machine-gun fire at frequent intervals. As the morning advanced this increased in volume and soon rifle-fire became audible. Owing to the fog it was almost impossible to tell what was going on, but the firing drew closer and the Battalion was ordered to occupy a well-wired trench on the crest of the slope behind Roisel and south of Tincourt-Boucly, about half a mile farther forward, known as the "Green Line," with the 6th Battalion on its left flank. The 5th Battalion had already been ordered towards Roisel, a railhead, to assist in checking the German advance up the Cologne Valley. The Companies were commanded as follows: A Company, Captain Beresford; B Company, Lieutenant J. Hutchinson; C Company, Captain S. Boys; D Company, Captain R. H. Guest Williams. The position was held with A Company on the right, C Company in the centre, B Company on the left and D Company in support. The enemy appeared to be devoting most of his attention to Roisel and the positions on the left of the Battalion front, and the morning passed fairly quietly. During the afternoon it became evident that the Divisions in front were retiring, for orders were received that these were to be allowed to pass through the Battalion. Only small groups did so, however; these being of the 66th Division, and eventually the line held by the 50th Division became the actual front line and in touch with the enemy. Private William Wilkinson here did good work, going out independently and ascertaining the enemy's positions in front. Captain Boys, together with the Adjutant, Captain J. H. Burrell, when reconnoitring the con-

tinuation of his trench to the right flank found that the Germans were actually occupying it in that direction. During the day certain transport was allowed forward with rations and water, and the machine-guns also came up. These latter actually crossed the Somme before orders to do so were received by Major Ralston, for he became so uneasy at the thought of the Brigade being without their support that he decided to take the risk of moving forward on his own responsibility.

On the Battalion front the enemy made little progress during the afternoon, all his assaults being beaten back. About 3 p.m., as the Regimental reserve of S.A.A. had not arrived, Captain H. J. Mowlam was sent with a party in search of a supply to Hancourt, an abandoned village on the right rear flank which had been converted into a dump of every kind of ammunition. Although its vicinity was being shelled, and there was momentary likelihood of it being blown up, he led his party in, and after a search of about twenty minutes succeeded in finding a supply and returning to the Battalion.

At 10 p.m. a message was received from Captain Cardew, commanding the right forward Company of the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.), to the effect that he had received orders to retire to Cartigny. About an hour later similar orders were received by the 8th Battalion and the Companies were instructed to retire in open order. This, in the dark, and over unknown country, without any screen between them and the enemy, was considered too risky, and the Companies therefore retired in fours as quickly as possible to Cartigny where, in the early morning of the 23rd, they linked up with the 6th Battalion and proceeded to dig in east of the village. It was some time before the whole Battalion was in touch owing to the dense fog which once more limited visibility to a few yards. Whilst in position here the movements of the enemy were ascertained by Lance-Corporal John Kendall who, though in poor health at the time, went out on patrol on no less than three occasions. Both he and Private William Wilkinson were awarded the Military Medal for their actions. About midday orders for a further retirement were received. In the fog B Company could not be found, and the Battalion was at last compelled to move off without it to the new rendezvous. B Company, however, retired later and then could find no trace of the Battalion nor even any stragglers from whom its position could be ascertained. Fortunately the enemy did not press the retirement at first, and following the most probable direction B Company, two hours later, rejoined, and the retirement was continued to Le Mesnil. Passing the chateau on the hill above Cartigny, a black kitten, very lame, began to follow the rear Company, this being considered by those who were superstitious as a sign of good luck for the Battalion. Owing to its lameness it had difficulty in keeping up with the troops, some of whom carried it for a

distance, but, as it strenuously resisted this, it had eventually to be left to the tender mercies of the Germans. Just after leaving Cartigny the enemy apparently discovered the retirement, for the first shells fell on the road crossing the summit of the hill, but by this time the Battalion was some two hundred yards down the western slope. Nearing Le Mesnil the road ran through hutments, canteens, and dumps of all the paraphernalia of an army, also past a supply train, all of which were being abandoned to the enemy.

The next position taken up by the Battalion was across the north-east entrance to Le Mesnil, the men lying extended in the open with the 6th Battalion on the left holding a stretch of flat, open country, and the 5th Battalion in support behind the left flank. The 7th Battalion (Pioneers) was at this time actually in the village but was then ordered back to Brie. Whilst the position was being taken up a number of tanks, which apparently could not be got away, were being put out of action and their stores of petrol fired.

Le Mesnil lay about a mile from the eastern bank of the Somme and was of the usual long straggling type of French village. To the south and east the ground rose rather abruptly and commanded the approaches to the crossings of the Somme; to the north the country was flat and interspersed with woods and marshes with thick undergrowth stretching away towards Péronne. The main crossings were, of course, the bridges at Péronne and Brie, but from the western end of the village a rough track led to a footbridge crossing to Eterpigny.

The first sign of the enemy was the appearance of a small body of cavalry moving along a ridge about fifteen hundred yards away; this did not advance, however. It was interesting as being the first occasion on which German cavalry was seen by the Battalion, for though in May, 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres it was known to be in readiness, no opportunity for its use arose.

The position in front of Le Mesnil was held for only a short time, for the left flank became heavily engaged and soon the enemy was pushing round both flanks. But during the time it was held Corporal James Arthur Cook, a Battalion signaller, climbed a telegraph pole in view of the enemy and cut down the wire which was needed to complete communication with the centre Company. For this he was given the Military Medal. A retirement to the western bank of the Somme was therefore ordered and carried out, very steadily covered by the 5th Battalion. The 8th Battalion was the first to cross, but there was no sign of the 6th Battalion and it was feared they had been cut off, especially as the 5th Battalion had now reached the river bank and the Germans had entered Le Mesnil and were also established on the high ground south-east of the village and firing on the river bank. The 5th Battalion was diverted to a bridge half a mile

farther south near to Brie in order to leave the narrow footbridge to Eterpigny free for a quick crossing by the 6th Battalion, of which there was still no sign, but eventually it emerged from the outskirts of Le Mesnil—in the distance it was at first thought to be Germans advancing—and soon reached the river and crossed. The delay in retiring was due to the Battalion having followed a track which led into the marshes only, and it was necessary to retrace its steps so as to pass between these and Le Mesnil, and before this was possible a Company (under Captain J. F. Aubin) had to be sent into Le Mesnil to hold its western end. This operation was carried out very gallantly and the Battalion enabled to extricate itself from a very awkward situation. The retirement of all the Battalions was very greatly helped by the overhead fire of the machine-guns of the Brigade under Major Ralston, which held their positions on the eastern bank until all the infantry had passed over. One span of the bridge was actually destroyed whilst one gun still remained in action; its gunners, throwing the gun into the river, managed, however, to save themselves. As the bank on the eastern side rose above the height of the bridge, it was not until almost half-way across that the troops actually came under fire and so no casualties were suffered.

Along the western bank of the Somme at this point ran a canal and a railway, the embankment of which was entrenched and afforded good cover. Immediately behind lay the village of Eterpigny and the main road from Villers Carbonnel to Péronne. Once across the river the Battalions immediately occupied the trenches on the railway, and with the broad river and its marshes in front of them felt in a tolerably secure position for the first time since the 21st. There was no news as to the position around Péronne on the left and there was some uneasiness on that account. Though parties of the enemy could be seen on the opposite bank, and there was a fair amount of firing till night fell when fires were observed on the enemy's side, there did not seem much likelihood of any further attack, and so ended March 23rd.

About 3 a.m. on the 24th, however, information was received that the enemy had succeeded in crossing the Somme near to Bray, and was therefore in the rear of the troops holding the western bank from Péronne through Brie to the south, for near to Péronne the Somme took a sweep to the west in its course to Amiens and the sea. A new Division having come up, the 151st Infantry Brigade was relieved and ordered back to Foucaucourt which was reached at 11 a.m., and the troops, who were now in a tired condition, at once settled down to the first sleep that had been possible since the retreat started. Here clean clothing, new boots and food were issued, but the "rest" was of very brief duration for the afternoon brought orders

for another move, this time forward again to trenches east of Foucaucourt, only a short distance from those occupied by the Battalion in February and March, 1917, and here the night 24/25th March was spent.

The enemy having effected a crossing of the Somme to the south, the 6th and 8th Battalions, together with Brigade Headquarters, were detached from the 50th Division and sent to the assistance of a Brigade of the 8th Division, and at daybreak on the 25th, as an attack was expected in the vicinity of Marcheplepot, the Battalion moved to the support of that position. In view of the meagre information available as to the situation (indeed, the orders were so scanty in information in general that the 6th Battalion, following the 8th, actually took with it to within a thousand yards of Marcheplepot its field kitchens) Lieutenant-Colonel Martin ordered B Company to act as an advance guard and secure the high ground on the left of the valley road along which the Battalion would have to pass as it approached Marcheplepot. The operation was carried out without contact with the enemy, but Marcheplepot appeared to be in flames; this, however, was found to be only an abandoned dump which was burning.

With B Company as a screen the Battalion moved forward to the railway running north past Misery from Marcheplepot. Here it came under both machine-gun and rifle-fire, but sustained few casualties. Sergeant Joseph Hunt, in spite of this fire, went forward voluntarily in front of Misery, noted all the dispositions of the enemy, and brought back valuable information. During the day the Germans launched three attacks, but these were not pressed with any great vigour except on the left flank which was in the air owing to the retirement of a Company of some Battalion of the 61st Division, and here C Company, under Captain S. Boys, had a very gruelling afternoon and only held on with difficulty. Private R. W. Dover, a Company runner, in the intervals of carrying many messages, twice helped wounded men out of positions in view of the enemy, and also secured the only two S.O.S. rockets the Battalion possessed from the bodies of the men who had been carrying them.

Night, with the skies again lit by burning dumps, brought the usual orders for withdrawal, this time to Ablaincourt, a distance of only between three and four thousand yards, but to quote Lieutenant J. Hutchinson, who was in command of B Company, this was "the most difficult of all the night marches carried out during this period. The country to be crossed was absolutely unknown to everyone, and the only maps available were on too small a scale to be of much use other than as a general guide. All landmarks were obliterated, and the ground was intersected in every direction by old French and German trenches, covered by old rusty barbed wire entanglements

and pitted all over with old shell-holes of the period prior to the German retirement of twelve months previously. The roads were mere tracks, mostly indiscernible, so overgrown with rank grass and weeds was the whole countryside, and to men already in a very exhausted condition the night's march was a veritable nightmare of falling into trenches and shell-holes, stumbling into barbed wire, and groping in the darkness for the new position." Only those who have endured it can realize how utterly impossible it often seemed to be able to climb out of even a shallow trench, and some of these were over six feet deep, or to resist the terrible temptation to lie where one had fallen just for a moment's sleep. Still they struggled on, at times the muscles of both legs tortured with cramp, puttees and clothing torn to shreds till, just as dawn was breaking, guides sent out from Battalion Headquarters at length found the Companies and brought them into the allotted trenches. Barely were these occupied than the enemy made his appearance, filtering his way up through the old trench system, and a determined attack quickly developed. There seemed to be no troops on the left, and the Germans could be seen in the distance working well round behind that flank.

The enemy were now making use of light trench mortars brought forward with their infantry and rifle grenades; casualties, in consequence, were becoming frequent. It was at this time that Corporal Gilbert Frater of B Company earned his Distinguished Conduct Medal, gallantly standing on the parapet of his trench pointing out targets for the Lewis guns although the enemy were within fifty or sixty yards. He remained in this exposed position until shot down, but fortunately he was able to be carried away.

The troops on the right were now retiring and both flanks then in danger of being turned. Soon a retirement was the only alternative to being surrounded and wiped out. Lieutenant-Colonel Martin therefore ordered the Battalion to retire by platoons from the right, thus leaving B Company to act as a rear-guard. For a short time the retirement went pretty well, but the numerous old trenches and barbed wire entanglements rendered it almost impossible to keep any kind of formation, and the Companies and platoons soon found themselves separated and involved in a maze of trenches whilst a galling fire from the German rifles and machine-guns made it impossible to attempt to cross the open. The result was that when at last the remnants of the Battalion gained the open ground in the rear of the trench system, mainly through following old communication trenches leading in diverse directions, they found themselves scattered over a wide area; men separated from their platoons and platoons from Companies. Though there was no sign of panic it was obvious that unless the men could be quickly collected most of them would fall into the hands of

the enemy, who was pushing his flanks forward, and the retirement would degenerate into a route. Mainly through the initiative and exertions of Captain S. Boys and Lieutenant J. Hutchinson, the greater part of the men, together with a few belonging to other units, were collected together and the retirement continued. All touch had been lost with Battalion Headquarters, and as no order had been given as to the next line of resistance the only course was to carry on the retirement until touch was gained with the nearest body of troops. At length a main road was reached which appeared to lead in the right direction, and after marching along this for a short distance the party was met by Brigadier-General Martin and Major Kentish (G.S.O.2, 50th Division) and was directed to proceed to Rosieres where the Division appeared to be concentrating. Here, on arrival, Battalion Headquarters was found. For his gallant leading in the operations of the 25th and 26th Captain S. Boys received the Distinguished Service Order. During this retirement from Ablaincourt to Rosieres, Captain Edward Elton Mather of the 1/3rd Northumbrian Field Ambulance, attached to the 8th Battalion as medical officer, remained in the midst of a barrage, and with the enemy rapidly approaching, after the retirement started, then helped to carry a stretcher for two miles under full observation of the enemy and machine-gun fire.

The evening of the 26th found the Battalion, now reorganized into three Companies, in hastily dug trenches on the south side of Rosieres. B Company held a position round a factory and a mound which formed the left flank and in which Battalion Headquarters established themselves. The other two Companies lay to the right of the factory and joined upon that flank with the 6th Battalion. The left flank was in touch with the 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment. A number of casualties were suffered from the fire of a British gun which, in spite of urgent and repeated messages, continued to work havoc in C Company.

Though the enemy could be seen some one thousand yards away, no attack developed until the morning of March 27th which, like each morning since the 21st, dawned in a heavy mist. As this cleared parties of the enemy could be seen working their way forward through the old trenches in front of the Battalion; snipers paid attention to these, but without checking the steady forward dribble. About mid-day the enemy opened artillery fire with 5.9's and trench mortars on the factory buildings, into the cellars of which Battalion Headquarters had by this time moved, and the occupants of the factory, as well as the men on the mound nearby, had a most unpleasant afternoon. Retaliation from the British guns was practically non-existent, the only result, so far as the Battalion was aware, being the wounding of Lieutenant-Colonel Martin in the hand by a splinter as he was

leaving his Headquarters. Lieutenant-Colonel Martin had been a worthy successor to Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull. One of the original British Expeditionary Force, serving with the 2nd Battalion Royal Scots, he first joined the 50th Division when appointed Adjutant to the 5th Battalion Border Regiment, which had become part of the 151st Infantry Brigade towards the end of 1915. Two memories of this sturdy soldier come to one's mind, the first being of an occasion on The Bluff in March, 1916, where the Brigade Commander in sending one of his staff with orders to the 5th Border, added "You will see Martin. You will like Martin," and the last of but a day or two before the 27th, when near to Marchelepôt, he rallied and led back into position a number of retiring troops of the 8th Division, and so he passed, and the Battalion was the poorer by the loss of a fine soldier and a very gallant gentleman. The command of the Battalion then devolved upon Major G. D. Gould who was at once ordered up from the transport.

As evening fell on the 27th it was evident that the enemy was massing for another attack, and the Battalion front was strengthened by the assistance of the Cavalry Machine-Gun Corps which was able to furnish a number of guns. These were posted on the left flank. Two platoons of a Battalion belonging to the 8th Division were also brought up in support, and when about 10 p.m. the expected attack took place a very warm reception was given the enemy, who failed to reach the position, and the line remained intact throughout the night.

Rosieres was thought to have been entirely evacuated by its civilian inhabitants, but shortly before the attack of 10 p.m. on the evening of the 27th an old Frenchwoman, with all the goods and chattels she had been able to pack on to a small barrow, suddenly emerged with her dog from a house and trotted away down the village street as fast as she could. They were most extraordinary some of these civilians. On the same day in Caix, a village roughly a mile west of Rosieres, which was repeatedly shelled, stood at the corner of the square a very old woman who, as an occasional batch of German prisoners was brought down through the village, rubbed her hands with glee, exclaiming: "*Beaucoup, beaucoup prisonniers.*"

A hastily summoned conference of Company Commanders took place on the morning of the 28th when, as it was anticipated that pressure on the right would result in a retirement in that quarter and consequent withdrawal of the Battalion, instructions were given in that event for Companies to conform to the movement and retire in succession from the right, leaving B Company once more to act as rear-guard. As events turned out the retirement started from the left, and the withdrawal that followed, over open ground under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, became a difficult and costly operation. Captain

H. J. Mowlam and Lieutenant J. Richardson were both wounded and made prisoners, whilst there were very heavy casualties amongst the other ranks.

In spite of the infinite weariness of both officers and men there were very many instances of extreme bravery in the battle of the 27th and 28th around Rosieres, a battle which gained Rosieres for the Regiment as one of its honours. Captain E.E. Mather, Royal Army Medical Corps, repeating his gallant action of the 26th, went back when the retirement was in progress to attend to the wounded left behind, and was afterwards missing. Lieutenant F. W. Harrison carried a very severely wounded non-commissioned officer through a barrage of artillery and machine-gun fire to Caix. Two stretcher-bearers, Privates Fred Pickup and William Walker Pickering, repeatedly returned and picked up men who had fallen during the retirement, whilst a third, Private William Seymour, went out in front of the Battalion position and dressed the wounds of men lying there. Private Ralph Ghitoni, though himself wounded in both legs by machine-gun fire, carried his Company Sergeant-Major away though the enemy were within three hundred yards. The Battalion and Company runners, when not employed in carrying messages, acted as stretcher-bearers and recovered wounded under the heavy shell, machine-gun and rifle-fire. Amongst these runners were Private James Stanley French, who passed no less than five times through the barrage with messages, Private Peter Molyneaux rescued a wounded man left behind by another Company, and Private William Nimmons, who was responsible for the saving of many wounded. Corporal Frederick Jamfrey (who had gained the Distinguished Conduct Medal at Hill 60 in 1916 by similar acts of bravery) voluntarily on three critical occasions passed through the barrage and brought up supports to the factory position, each time in full view of the enemy a distance of five hundred yards each way, and then after three runners had fallen under the machine-gun fire, he succeeded himself in reaching the 6th Battalion on the right and established communication. Private Thomas Lawrence O'Brien maintained liaison with the 1st Battalion Worcester Regiment by carrying messages, although each time he had to cross ground in full view of the enemy whose guns were firing over open sights. To cover the retirement of their Companies the Lewis gunners remained in position with their guns till the last moment. The enemy were within a hundred yards of Privates David Fife and Walter Horseman before they withdrew, and Private Joseph Peart carried on till his gun was destroyed by a shell. Three separate attempts by the Germans to break the line were checked mainly by the gallant handling of his gun by Private George Stagg.

That the Battalion succeeded in withdrawing from Rosieres was

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in a great measure due to Captain J. H. Burrell, greatly helped by Lieutenant A. V. McLare who, moving about in the open, were always the last to retire; Sergeant John Esau Whittle of B Company, who carried on after his Company Sergeant-Major was wounded, Lance-Sergeant John Devitt and Corporal George Rogerson, who rallied and organized their men at each stage of the movement, though both were wounded by shells, Devitt in the leg and Rogerson in both the body and leg. One of the most popular officers of the 50th Division, Lieutenant-Colonel F. Robson (Yorkshire Regiment) commanding the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.), fell during this retirement.

The Battalion, or rather what remained of it, at length reached a line of old French trenches in the rear of Rosieres, and in front of Caix, where a hasty reorganization was made, for the enemy appeared likely to follow up and press the attack. This did not happen, however, but they could be seen working around both flanks, especially in the direction of Caix, their movements being easily traced by the V ry lights which they used even in daylight throughout the whole of this period.

The general situation was most obscure, and some time elapsed before communication could be established with either Brigade or Divisional Headquarters. Ultimately orders were received to retire on Moreuil where the Brigade was to concentrate. Beaucourt, to the right, which had been occupied by the 6th Battalion and Brigade Headquarters, was reported to be now in the possession of the enemy, and a detour was therefore made along the bank of the River Luce through Ignaucourt, and Moreuil was reached about 11 p.m. after a very long and weary march in a heavy drizzle of rain.

A map will show how very nearly the Battalion was to being cut off had this withdrawal been delayed, for quite early in the afternoon the Germans held both Caix and Guillaucourt. An interesting action at Guillaucourt was visible from a spur of some high ground above Cayeux in the Luce Valley. This point was held by a number of French troops, a party of the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.), and some machine-guns of the 151st Infantry Brigade, which had only reached here on their way to support the 6th and 8th Battalions at Rosieres. This spur was on the south bank of the Luce. The north bank rose very gradually from the river to Wiencourt and Guillaucourt, which stood on the ridge above Caix. In Cayeux were the mixed up units of two Divisions. Two mounted scouts were seen to ride along the skyline opposite into Guillaucourt; in a few minutes they reappeared lying on their horses' necks and riding hard, ultimately disappearing from view. A little later a number of men in extended order emerged from some hidden ground north of Cayeux, and advanced towards

Guillaucourt till, when within about six hundred yards, they apparently came under heavy fire and took cover, the spurts of dust from bullets striking the ground amongst them were plainly visible. No further advance was made, and the Germans then began to filter down a small watercourse running from the village into the Luce, but these then came under fire from the spur, and there the situation remained when the order for a withdrawal to a new position for the night was received. This retirement was perhaps the most spectacular of the whole retreat at all events in this sector of the Fifth Army, for south of the Luce the country was open and sloped gradually for some thousands of yards to some large woods in the distance. Wherever one looked were to be seen infantry and artillery all moving to the rear and converging upon the Roye-Amiens road. All was orderly, though as a gunner officer was heard to remark, "It looked like the end." The Germans seemed to have exhausted their efforts, for with the exception of a few shells which burst harmlessly, there was no interference. Indeed, this was actually the case, for Ludendorf, in his account of this March Offensive, writes that his troops, pressing hurriedly along the road to Amiens, crossed the Somme, the bridges over which were not yet repaired, far ahead of their supplies, and were compelled by the need of these and through exhaustion to rest. Along the edge of the woods a new Division was digging in a line which looked very thin and at a farm, La Maison Blanche, on the Roye-Amiens road, were a number of the French who, however, seemed to be more concerned with the issue of their rations and the preparation of a meal than fighting. So far as the gunner officer's comment went it was correct in one respect, though not what he had in his mind, for, with the exception of a little further gain of ground, it was the end of the German advance on Amiens. Fighting, of course, continued, but after a day or two the line held.

On March 29th a Composite Battalion was formed from the survivors of the three Battalions of the 151st Infantry Brigade, under Major Blumer of the 5th Battalion, with Major Gould as Second-in-Command, Captain J. H. Burrell as Adjutant. Captain S. Boys and Captain J. Hutchinson commanded the two Companies which was all this Battalion consisted of. As soon as it was organized the Battalion marched from Moreuil to a wood a mile north of Villers-aux-Erables, between that place and Demuin where, on the north side of the main road from Amiens to Roye, it joined the remainder of the 50th Division under Brigadier-General Riddell at 12 noon.

The Battalion then took up a position in support of the French on the high ground to the south of Demuin facing east, remaining here till 9 p.m., suffering heavy losses from shelling and direct machine-gun fire. At 10 p.m. a withdrawal had been made to the

road running south-south-west to Moreuil, and here orders were awaited.

At 3 a.m. on the 30th the Battalion came under the orders of the 61st Division and withdrew to a line a thousand yards farther west to cover the retirement of the French to where, at 7 a.m., both the French and the British line fell back in touch with the enemy, who followed closely. At 10 a.m. a counter-attack took place by the French and British Cavalry which passed through the Battalion's position, but at 2 p.m. the French again withdrew through the Battalion; however, two hours later they again came forward and reinforced the position. At 5 p.m. orders were received for a withdrawal to the high ground between Hangard and Domart to cover from here the retirement of the remainder of the line, and by 8 p.m. held an outpost position there with a standing patrol in Hangard.

At 9 a.m. on the 31st the French fell back, and the Battalion continued to hold its position all day, though very severely shelled, until 6 p.m., when it took up a position to fight a rear-guard action. Three hours later, however, orders were received for it to join the Composite 50th Division under Lieutenant-Colonel Irwin (Northumberland Fusiliers) in front of Gentelles where, at 11 p.m., a position in front, i.e., east, of that place was occupied. Here on April 1st it was relieved and moved back to Longeau from where, on the 2nd, it marched to Saleux where the details of each Battalion were waiting.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLES OF THE LYS, ESTAIRES AND MERVILLE

ON April 1st the details of the Battalion marched from Sains-en-Amienois to Saleux, a village on the railway a short distance to the south of Amiens, there to await the remainder of the Battalion now withdrawn from action but still at Longeau. The transport, which, however, was to proceed by road to the new area into which the 50th Division was moving, set off and staged for the night 1/2nd April at Bourdon. On April 2nd the main portion of the Battalion arrived at Saleux where, together the details, a total strength of 26 officers, 460 other ranks, entrainment took place for Rue, which was reached at 8 a.m. on the following day. Rue was a small, somewhat picturesque town almost on the coast and about midway between Abbeville and Boulogne. Here previous to the arrival of the units of the Division a "Town Cryer" paraded the streets, announcing that the "English soldiers who had been fighting against the Germans for France were coming and must be kindly treated." However, in Rue there was little opportunity for any special attention to be shown, for after a short rest and some hot tea the Battalion set out for Vron, a distance of about three miles, where the transport rejoined during the day from Domvast where it had spent the previous night. At Vron the Battalion was on historic ground, for but a short distance away were the village and forest of Cr cy. A Battalion of the Northumberland Fusiliers was actually billeted in Cr cy. Hardly had the Battalion settled down into its billets when orders for a further move were received, and at 11.15 a.m. on the 4th it embussed on the Abbeville-Boulogne road for B thune. The transport, moving independently, again stayed overnight at Willeman, reaching B thune on the 6th.

The journey of some seventy miles, though tiring, was interesting, for the route lay through Montreuil, the seat of the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force. Soon after leaving Montreuil the convoy passed by a road junction where stood a large signpost pointing the way to Boulogne and turning everyone's thoughts to leave and home. Farther on a mining district was entered, and at

Chocques the miners returning home from the pit in a garb of strange appearance and wearing "cap comforters" on their heads, called forth many remarks and much laughter. At 8.30 p.m. Vendin-les-Béthune, a short distance from Béthune itself, was reached and here the Battalion debussed. The night was exceedingly dark and marching in consequence difficult, so that it was 10.30 p.m. before the Battalion reached its billets, a tobacco factory in the centre of the town. However, there was a hot meal ready and soon all were settled in.

The real cause of the sudden move from Vron was not generally known, and most anticipated a period of rest after the March retreat and were therefore quite content to be in Béthune where many shops still were open; there was prospect of entertainment and additions in the way of luxuries to rations obtainable.

On April 5th Major P. Kirkup, M.C., rejoined from the Senior Officers' School, Aldershot, and assumed command of the Battalion, in succession to Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin, D.S.O., M.C., who, it will be remembered, was wounded at Rosieres on March 26th; Major Gould then resuming his original position as Second-in-Command. Major Kirkup brought with him from the base a draft of 160 other ranks, a good keen draft of nineteen-year-old boys from the 21st Graduated Battalion training in Durham City. Indeed so keen were they that he confessed that he was thankful to have reached the end of the journey, for many of them were so anxious to get as much practice as possible with their rifles that they took to firing from the windows of the carriages at cattle and other objects on the way which appealed to them as targets. Fortunately there appeared to have been no casualties as a result of this, for nothing official in the way of complaint ever came through. Poor boys, they were very homesick and tired when they did arrive, and in less than a week many of them had fought their first and last fight.

The transport did not reach Béthune until April 6th, on which day the Divisional Commander visited the Battalion, and later the Commanding Officer with all Company officers reconnoitred the defences of the town.

At 12.30 a.m. on the 7th orders were received to be prepared to move north. No further instructions were received till 1 p.m., when the Battalion paraded and marched to Vendin-les-Béthune to entrain. This was carried out at 3.30 p.m. and at 5 p.m. Neuf Berquin was reached and here the Battalion went into billets. Its strength on this date amounted to 26 officers, 622 other ranks. The following day was spent in reorganizing and all officers reconnoitred the defences of Lestrem. A church parade, the first since leaving Marcelcave on March 21st, was also held and baths were available, for the officer-in-command of baths, a Canadian officer with memories of April, 1915.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL P. KIRKUP, D.S.O., M.C.
Commanding April to October, 1918

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The real cause of the sudden move from Vron was not generally known, and I most anticipated a period of rest after the March retreat and was therefore quite content to be in Béthune where many short stints of work were being done; there was prospect of entertainment and additional supplies to rations obtainable.

With Major P. Kirkup, M.C., rejoined from the Somme, and Aldershot, and assumed command of the Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin, D.S.O., M.C., who was remembered, was wounded at Rosieres on March 26th, and then resuming his original position as Second

Major Kirkup brought with him from the base a draft of 100 ranks, a good keen draft of nineteen-year-old boys from the Durham Battalion training in Durham City. Indeed so keen was the draft that he confessed that he was thankful to have reached the front on the journey, for many of them were so anxious to get as much practice as possible with their rifles that they took to firing from the windows of the carriages at cattle and other objects on the way which had been pointed out to them as targets. Fortunately there appeared to have been no result of this, for nothing official in the way of firing took place through. Poor boys, they were very homesick and did arrive, and in less than a week many of them were killed in the last fight.

did not reach Béthune until April 6th, on which
 1. Commander visited the Battalion, and later the
 2. with all Company officers reconnoitred the
 3. town.

On the 7th orders were received to be prepared to receive further instructions were received till 1 p.m., when the Battalion moved and marched to Vendin-les-Béthune to entrain. At 3.30 p.m. and at 5 p.m. Neuf Berquin was reached. The Battalion went into billets. Its strength on the 7th was 622 officers, 622 other ranks. The following day the Battalion and all officers reconnoitred the defences of the area. The first since leaving Marcellave on the 1st. The field and baths were available, for the officer-in-charge. A Canadian officer with memories of April, 1915.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL P. KIRKUP, D.S.O., M.C.
Commanding April to October, 1918

placed these at the disposal of the Battalion with priority over all other units in the neighbourhood.

At 1 a.m. on April 9th orders were received for the relief of the Portuguese in the front line during the evening of that day, but within four hours of their receipt the Germans attacked and the Portuguese retreated. Alas for the hopes of a rest. In the Brigade orders for the intended relief the somewhat facetious Brigade-Major laid down as the codes for the notification of the completion of the relief on the part of the various units of the Brigade the words forming the sentence, "We never expected this, did we?" and this proved rather more apt than he anticipated.

Both in 1915 and 1917 the month of April had seen the Battalion engaged in heavy fighting in one of the great battles of the war, and now again in the April of 1918 such was to be its fortune. Though not recovered from the strain of the March retreat with the Fifth Army less than three weeks previously and in part composed of nineteen-year-old boys only a few days out from England, yet in these new battles the Battalion put up some of its very best fights.

Since the beginning of March the weather had been unusually dry, and in consequence in the low-lying Lys valley the ground, which otherwise would hardly have permitted it, was sufficiently firm to allow of the passage of troops and guns.

Between the 9th and 30th of April the Germans employed in this second great offensive no less than 42 Divisions, of which 33 were fresh and 9 had fought in the first offensive of March on the Somme, and against these 42 German Divisions a total of only 25 British Divisions were engaged, of those 8 alone were fresh and 17 had taken prominent parts in the Somme Battle.

The Battalion, 26 officers, 622 other ranks strong, was on April 9th still in billets at Neuf Berquin, some two miles north-west of Estaires, when at 5.30 a.m. a heavy bombardment opened on the front of the 2nd Portuguese Division. The portion of this front with which the 151st Infantry Brigade was concerned ran from a point about 150 yards north-east of the Estaires-La Bassée road near to where it is crossed by the Rue du Bois, thence through Neuve Chapelle to Chapigny Farm opposite the German positions around Aubers, a front of some 3,500 yards. But for this sudden, though not altogether unexpected, attack the Portuguese Division was to have been relieved on the night of the 9/10th April by the 50th and 55th British Divisions, for our allies at the time were weak in numbers and greatly in need of a rest. The 4th and 6th Portuguese Infantry Brigades were in the line.

It was indeed fortunate that the attack did not develop a day earlier, for on arrival of the 151st Infantry Brigade in and around

Estaires on the evening of April 7th every Battalion was short of ammunition, whilst the machine and Lewis guns lost during the March retreat had not then been replaced. It was only during the early hours of the morning of April 8th that these, together with ammunition, were received.

So far as the 8th Battalion was concerned a further fortunate circumstance was that it occupied the village of Neuf Berquin, for Estaires, where Brigade Headquarters together with the 5th and 6th Battalions were billeted, was very heavily shelled. The 6th Battalion was particularly unfortunate for the Convent in the main street near to the centre of the town, in which nearly all the Company officers had their quarters, was struck by several shells, apparently a salvo, and no less than fourteen officers were killed or wounded. Only the previous day Captain J. F. Aubin, D.S.O., M.C., who was killed, seemed to have a premonition of the impending disaster, for he remarked that the Germans would have a big haul if they put a shell into the dormitory where he and the others were sleeping. The 6th Battalion went into action within an hour or two with only three officers in addition to Major Heslop, D.S.O., and his Adjutant.

There were many casualties amongst the civilians as they endeavoured to escape from Estaires, especially about 4.30 p.m. on the 9th when, the Germans having reached the eastern outskirts of the town, numbers were caught by the barrage placed around the northern edge across the road leading to Neuf Berquin. Many huddled together in miserable groups under the shelter of the walls of the last few houses of the town watched despairingly the more venturesome making their way towards safety. Amongst these latter an old man and his wife pushing between them a barrow laden with all they could move of their possessions, had almost passed through when the man was struck by a splinter and fell. His wife, unharmed, immediately lost her reason and tearing out her hair, threw herself on his body with frantic cries. The others trudged stolidly on, unheeding. A considerable number, however, remained in the town sheltering in the cellars and subsequently falling into the hands of the Germans. Occasionally some door would open and a terrified occupant inquire of a passing British soldier, "*Allemands avance?*"

The fighting of the 9th to 12th April was very stubborn, the Germans only succeeding in advancing about five miles in these four days from their first point of contact with the Battalion, and this against men (without any artillery support—the guns of the Portuguese having been taken by the Germans in their first thrust) so worn by the March retreat that throughout these days of fighting some fell asleep even in the act of firing, and only by the constant efforts of those strong enough to overcome the overwhelming desire to sleep

was it possible to keep going the constant moves in the fluctuating fighting. A moment's halt and men dropped, asleep before they reached the ground. In his history of the Irish Guards in the Great War, Mr. Rudyard Kipling writes:

"Experts in miseries say that, for sheer strain, the Lys overwent anything imagined in the war, and in this many who have suffered much are agreed."

The country was almost a dead level rising imperceptibly to the Forêt de Nieppe and much enclosed by hedges. In the farms and cottages scattered everywhere the Germans placed their machine-guns, and firing from windows and roofs swept a very wide extent of ground, whilst their light trench mortars brought forward with their infantry were the cause of many casualties, especially about the banks of the Rivers Lawe and Lys.

"With our backs to the wall," wrote the Commander-in-Chief in his special order of the day on April 11th, he might well have written of his Armies, "as the wall." "*On ne passe pas*," cried the French at Verdun in 1916, and here was the same spirit.

On hearing the bombardment the Battalion hurriedly stood to arms and at 7.30 was ordered to occupy the positions already reconnoitred in the neighbourhood of Lestrem. The Companies moved off independently under the following Commanders: A Company, Captain F. M. Weeks; B Company, Captain J. Hutchinson; C Company, Captain S. Boys; D Company, Captain R. H. Guest Williams, and following the route via La Gorgue, through heavy shell-fire, all reached their positions by 9.30 a.m., relieving the 11th Cyclist Battalion with the exception of its Lewis gun sections which remained pending the arrival of the Battalion guns following in the "A" echelon of the transport under Lieutenant J. F. Hobson. Owing to the bombardment La Gorgue was in flames, and its streets, blocked by the fallen houses, impossible to vehicles, so that on reaching here the transport found it necessary to return and proceed by a circuitous route through Merville, with the result that it was 11.30 a.m. before the Companies were in possession of their own guns. Up to this hour although the posts were being heavily shelled, no infantry action had developed against them. The Portuguese holding the line to the immediate front of the Battalion had been attacked in force and were retiring through the posts; the last of these passed by 11 a.m. and the Battalion front then became the actual front line.

After their relief by the Battalion the 11th Cyclist Battalion were employed, together with parties from the Battalion, in patrolling the approaches to the positions held by the Companies, and about 10 a.m. reported on the information of a Portuguese officer that the Germans had captured three lines of trenches, and at the same time an officer

from the British Mission reported the Portuguese retiring through Laventie. Half an hour later a British interpreter attached to the Portuguese Army reached Battalion Headquarters but could give little information other than that a retirement upon the Battalion's position was in progress, and owing to the flat nature of the country without vantage points and with observation obstructed by the many hedges the progress of the enemy could not be ascertained, and this continued to be the situation until after midday, when he actually developed an attack with his infantry upon the posts.

As will be seen from the map, the position held by the Battalion lay on the eastern bank of the canalized River Lawe where it formed a sharp salient and consisted of a series of detached posts in the form of redoubts, covering the crossings of the Lawe. To the north, i.e., on the left flank, Pont Riquel Post, in the centre in front of Lock de la Rault Le Marais Post East, Le Marais Post West and Le Marais Post South, and about 1,000 yards south-west of this latter post where a foot-bridge and a R.E. bridge crossed the Lawe there was also a garrison. Flanking these posts were the 6th and 5th Battalions (D.L.I.) to the north and units of the 51st Divisions to the south, though these latter only arrived later on and for a time that flank was completely open. The posts were held by two Companies, A and B, with D Company in support, on the bank of the Lawe about 500 yards north-west of Le Marais West Post, whilst C Company was in reserve near Battalion Headquarters, some 500 yards to the west of Lock de la Rault. The Vickers' machine-guns were in position on the bank of the Lawe covering the intervals between the posts.

Apparently about 1 p.m. Le Marais Post East was captured by the Germans, the first information as to this received at Battalion Headquarters being contained in a message timed 1.40 p.m. from Lieutenant Robinson in command of Le Marais Post South. This message also stated that the enemy were attacking his position but were being held up by the fire of the machine-guns on the canal bank which was inflicting heavy loss on them, and that he had succeeded in rallying a number of Portuguese with Lewis guns who were remaining in his post. A machine-gun was thereupon moved farther to the north along the bank of the Lawe to cover the gap between Pont Riquel and the Le Marais Posts.

The fall of Le Marais Post East was somewhat surprising, for though it, like all the posts, possessed an excellent field of fire, no heavy firing had been heard from its direction, and the only solution of its early capture, for none of its garrison survived to tell the story, would appear to be that it was outflanked to the north under cover of some buildings and an orchard from which it was

rushed, and this was probable in view of the fact that the enemy had previously surrounded the post of the 6th Battalion at Riez Bailleul and also pushed back their garrison from Clifton Post. It is possible, too, that the enemy were allowed to approach within short distance through being mistaken for retiring Portuguese whose uniforms certainly bore a resemblance to those worn by the Germans. However, this has never been cleared up.

At 2.30 p.m. Captain Guest Williams with D Company was ordered to keep in close touch with the situation at Lock de la Rault, to move two platoons forward and be prepared to counter-attack at the Lock if necessary without further orders as this point was to be held at all cost.

Following the capture of Le Marais Post East, the Germans worked round Le Marais Post West from the north and, shortly before 3 p.m., captured this post with its garrison also, and then advanced in a south-westerly direction. As this threatened Lock de la Rault, the garrison of which was very weak, Captain Guest Williams was ordered that if he had not already done so to push his two platoons forward to hold the bridge head of this crossing.

By 4.30 p.m. the Le Marais South Post, which up to then had still held out, was almost surrounded and in great danger of being cut off. Lieutenant Robinson therefore withdrew his men, fighting a rear-guard action, to near the foot and R.E. bridges, where he dug in a line in conjunction with the garrison at that point. A stretcher-bearer, Private J. W. Ridley, after the garrison had withdrawn, went back under heavy fire and brought out a badly wounded man. A platoon of C Company was at the same time sent here and another platoon ordered to advance to Lock de la Rault. As the position of Battalion Headquarters had been heavily shelled for the last two or three hours and many casualties caused amongst the orderlies, it was now moved into a house on the eastern outskirts of Lestrem.

Half an hour later, at 5 p.m., under cover of an artillery barrage, the Germans advanced, and a few gained a crossing at Lock de la Rault, but were then held up and a counter-attack was at once ordered by the three platoons under Captain R. H. Guest Williams.

The situation was now very critical, for half the Battalion reserve had been used and touch quite lost with Brigade Headquarters owing, it was found, to the buried cable between the report centre near Pont Riquel and the Brigade having been deliberately cut. At this time, too, the 6th Battalion garrison at Pont Levis had been forced back to the northern bank of the river. A little later a counter-attack restored the position here. In this counter-attack the 151st Trench Mortar Battery took part, and Lieutenant R. Curry of the 8th

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Battalion, who was commanding the battery, was fatally wounded. A message was sent to the 152nd Infantry Brigade, 51st Division, reporting the situation, and asking if any support could be given by them.

The counter-attack on Lock de la Rault opened just as it was getting dusk, Captain Guest Williams leading it personally and advancing with the first line. Though few of the enemy appeared to have actually crossed the river, a withering machine-gun fire was at once opened, and any further advance became impossible. Captain Guest Williams then crawled forward alone to reconnoitre. After some time had elapsed, as no information had been received, Lieutenant M. A. Smith went forward from his position in support to ascertain the situation, and on being informed that Captain Guest Williams had gone forward to reconnoitre and not returned, at once made search for him, but without success owing to the darkness. Later on, however, Captain Guest Williams crawled back badly wounded, and had to be carried to the rear. Lieutenant Smith then assumed command and the position was organized and strengthened. Captain A. V. McLare, with a portion of A Company, now came up to reinforce, and took over command.

At 7.30 p.m. two Battalions of the 153rd Infantry Brigade, 6th Black Watch, and 7th Gordons, arrived at the cross-roads near to Lestrem Post, with orders to dig in on the west bank of the River Lawe from Pont Levis to the bridge, about a thousand yards south-east of Lestrem Post, gaining touch at this bridge with the 152nd Infantry Brigade. These two Battalions moved into position just in time to partly assist in the counter-attack by D Company on Lock de la Rault. In spite of the failure of this, a line on the right of D Company was established under Captain H. B. Holdsworth, and connected up on its right with a Battalion of the 51st Division. It was then suggested that the 6th Black Watch and 7th Gordons should hold the line occupied by the Battalion, which would move north and fill the gap between the 5th and 6th Battalions (D.L.I.) and Pont Levis, but whilst this was being arranged the Black Watch and Gordons received orders to withdraw, the former Battalion into reserve, and the latter to side-step in the La Fosse direction, and so the 8th Battalion was left holding the salient with but very few men. The garrison of the R.E. and foot bridges was, however, relieved by the 7th Gordons about 11 p.m., and at 11.40 p.m., a message was received from the 152nd Infantry Brigade to the effect that the 6th Black Watch might take over the line from Pont Riquel to the R.E. and foot bridges before dawn, but nothing further was heard of this move.

During the night of the 9th, Lieutenant K. J. Frazer took out

a patrol, and though both artillery and machine-gun fire was incessant at Pont Riquel, succeeded in ascertaining the exact position of the enemy at this point. About 1.30 a.m. on the 10th, however, the Germans attacked the bridge head here, and the whole of the Battalion position was shelled intensely, the German artillery firing over open sights, the flashes of the guns and the explosion of the shells seeming to occur practically at the same moment. Most of the garrison of the bridge head were killed or wounded, and the enemy in considerable force gained a footing in the defences. Elsewhere in the position the casualties, which included Acting Company Sergeant-Major Campbell of D Company who was killed, were very heavy. Two Lewis gunners, Private James Dinsty and Private John Joseph Armstrong, salvaged a Lewis gun when their own had been destroyed, and the remainder of the garrison killed or wounded, and with it held on to their post till all ammunition was exhausted, so delaying the enemy's advance at a very critical moment. As it was impossible to counter-attack with the few men available it was decided to withdraw to the west bank and destroy the bridge. The explosive charges failed to do so completely, but on attempting to cross, the enemy were driven back.

At 5 a.m. on the 10th the 6th Black Watch again arrived, and began to take up a line along the stream to the west of Lestrem.

The Battalion now held Pont Levis where the bridge was only partly destroyed, the western bank of the River Lawe at Pont Riquel, a line of posts west of Lock de la Rault and Lestrem Post, with the 51st Division holding the position around the R.E. and foot bridges on the right.

At daybreak the Germans advanced slowly but surely under cover of machine-gun and artillery fire. Their field guns seemed to spring up everywhere though, no doubt, much of the fire was from light trench mortars. Captain Holdsworth was killed, and Lieutenants M. A. Smith and Thompson wounded. Sergeant Jackson of A Company was very conspicuous in controlling the fire of his platoon and greatly helped to delay the German advance. By 8.30 a.m. they had, however, succeeded in effecting a crossing at Pont Riquel, and from here advanced in a south-westerly direction. The Battalion then withdrew to the road west of Lestrem, but with its right still connected up with the 7th Gordons near to the R.E. and foot bridges, and with the 6th Black Watch now on its left flank near to Pont Levis. During this withdrawal a non-commissioned officer and fifteen men were practically cut off, when Corporal Joseph Mulgrew, observing their position, made his way to them and succeeded in extricating the whole party.

In the new position the remnants of the Battalion were

reorganized, and a counter-attack was made on Lestrem in conjunction with the 51st Division. This was entirely successful, and by 11.30 a.m. Lestrem Post was recaptured and a line of posts re-established east of the village with B Company on the right, C and D Companies in the centre, and A Company on the left. The situation did not develop further during the afternoon. At 6 p.m. considerable numbers of the enemy were west of the River Lawe, and artillery support was asked for. What little there was in response came from a single battery which, somehow or other, had arrived from Armentières, and its shells mostly fell short.

The Germans then opened a heavy bombardment on Lestrem and, in particular, on the position held by the Battalion near Lestrem Post. The line, except at Lestrem Post, withdrew temporarily, but by 7.15 p.m., was re-established in its original support positions, and patrols were pushing into Lestrem. During the bombardment when a shell burst in his Company Headquarters, Private William Porter, though partly buried and much shaken, released himself and rescued those who were wounded although the fire was very intense.

At 8.15 p.m. the enemy broke through a portion of the 51st Division front, near the R.E. and foot bridges, and advanced. Lestrem Post, though heavily shelled for over an hour, remained intact till it was eventually so badly outflanked, on its right, and shelled that the garrison was compelled to withdraw and assist in refusing the right flank, but still holding on to the road junction about a hundred and fifty yards west of the post.

The situation with regard to the 51st Division front now became very obscure, and numbers of stragglers were arriving near to Battalion Headquarters.

In order that there might be more complete co-operation amongst the Battalions involved, a joint Headquarters of the 6th Black Watch, 7th Gordons, and the Battalion was now established.

The night was very dark, and little information could be obtained of the enemy to the south. The stragglers who had been collected were sent forward in that direction in extended order.

It had been intended that the 51st Division should take over the 8th Battalion front in the early morning, but owing to the situation this could not be effected until after midnight when the 6th Black Watch side-stepped and took over the line. This done, the Battalion moved into Brigade Reserve at Beaupre, arriving there just after dawn on the 11th. Brigade Headquarters were now at a farm on the edge of the aviation ground just north of the Lys Canal at Beaupre.

The situation was now that the 6th Battalion (D.L.I.) with one Company of the 7th Battalion (D.L.I. Pioneers) on the right held the

line along the western bank of the River Lawe from a little south of the railway bridge in touch with the 51st Division, thence across an open stretch of ground to the canal, along the northern bank of this to the Estaires-Chapelle Duvelle road, where it was in touch with the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.), who continued the line along a series of redoubts to the Estaires-Neuf Berquin road.

A and D Companies, under Captain F. M. Weeks, and Captain A. V. McLare respectively, were ordered to move from Beaupre and take up a position in support to the Company of the 7th Battalion on the left flank of the 6th Battalion, but owing to the development of the situation on the right, where the enemy were seen in l'Epinette, these two Companies were brought back and ordered instead to take up a line along the railway from the crossing south-east of Meurillon, in touch with the 51st Division, on the right, towards the River Lawe on the left, till in touch with the 6th Battalion which, owing to the 51st Division having been pushed back, now held the railway for some distance to the west from the railway bridge. Time and the situation, however, allowed for a hasty breakfast—a hunk of bread or a biscuit in one hand and a lump of bully beef in the other—before moving off, and they were in position by 10 a.m. The enemy at this time could be seen massing on the Lestrem-l'Epinette road, and artillery fire was asked for on this point, but there was still little response, though eventually it was brought to bear on Lestrem.

Meanwhile B and C Companies were in reserve along the canal bank, north of Beaupre.

At 10.50 a.m. orders were received from the Brigade that in the event of the 51st Division being pushed back so that the position along the railway became untenable, that portion of the 6th Battalion south of the canal was to withdraw to the northern bank by the pontoon bridge near Beaupre and continue the line westwards along the canal from the Company of the 7th Battalion; the 8th Battalion to fight a rear-guard action in a north-westerly direction, falling back on two Companies of the 7th Battalion holding bridgeheads at Merville, and then take up a line on the north side of the canal, obtaining touch to the east with the 6th Battalion again, and maintaining throughout the movement touch with the 51st Division. So far as the pontoon bridge at Beaupre was concerned, the 6th Battalion was responsible for its destruction. The instructions contained in these orders were, however, only to be carried out if the situation made such action absolutely necessary. Brigade Headquarters then moved to Robemetz and the 6th Battalion occupied the aviation ground as a Headquarters. At 1.15 p.m. a verbal message was received from the Brigade ordering B and C Companies north of the canal to support the 5th Battalion and by 2.15 p.m. this had been carried out. The enemy was then found

to have broken through on the left and be occupying houses at Chapelle Duvelle, outflanking the position and continuing his advance westwards. Lieutenant N. Clark, as Brigade Transport Officer, was at the time waiting with a convoy of pack animals bearing ammunition at the western end of Chapelle Duvelle, but fortunately this fact was remembered by the writer who reached him in time to enable the convoy to withdraw in the direction of Robemetz. The following incident, which occurred at the time, serves to show the plight of many of the population still in the battle zone. The pack animals having been sent off at a trot, Lieutenant Clark and the writer followed on foot. On passing one of the last cottages in the outskirts of Chapelle Duvelle the glow of a fire from a stove through one of the windows was seen, and a longing for coffee overcame all other considerations. On knocking, the door was opened by an elderly dame who at once acquiesced in the request, poured out a supply from the invariable coffee-pot on the stove, and resumed her seat by the fire opposite to an even more elderly dame and took up her knitting. There they sat, calmly awaiting the inevitable. One hoped, but doubted, that they would be gently dealt with by their next visitors.

Soon afterwards, under the direction of Captain R. H. Wharrier, a counter-attack by a Company of the 7th Battalion, which happened to be passing Brigade Headquarters where it was halted and used for the purpose by General Martin, was launched against Chapelle Duvelle, and though it succeeded found it impossible to hold on and fell back again towards Robemetz.

Between Chapelle Duvelle and Robemetz was a line of trenches with the newly excavated earth carefully arranged in front and behind. They had been dug with mathematical precision diagonally across the centre of a large field with a wonderful field of fire—for the Germans when they reached the excellent cover surrounding the field at the target these trenches provided. It was valuable labour and time wasted, and whoever was responsible for their siting could have had no infantry and very little practical military experience. But they were beautiful trenches. It was rather suspected that the officer in charge of a party of Royal Engineers which was roped in to form a reserve whilst passing Brigade Headquarters was the culprit, for his mental attitude to the grave situation was such that he protested against this because his men had been digging trenches all the morning and had not yet had their dinners!

B and C Companies refused their northern flank whilst Battalion Headquarters moved along the canal bank and then, conforming to the movements of the 6th Battalion, A and D Companies and the 51st Division on the right withdrew to a line from Meurillon northwards across the Chapelle Duvelle road.

A and D Companies now withdrew across the foot-bridge as ordered, and connected up with the new line to the canal bank, but owing to the troops south of the canal falling yet farther back, this flank on the canal had to be refused till its right rested on Merville. There were insufficient men to hold this line in any kind of formation, and a considerable gap existed between the right flank and the canal. It consisted of small posts, and even then it was impossible to cover all the approaches. The situation south of the canal was very obscure and the enemy appeared to be close to the Merville goods station in that direction.

The 6th and 8th Battalions now occupied a joint Headquarters slightly north-east of the town.

The existence of the gap between the right flank of the Battalion and the canal, through which the enemy were passing, had been reported to the Brigade, and about fifty men of the 7th Battalion, detached from that Battalion's Company before its counter-attack on Chapelle Duvelle, were sent to fill it, but arrived too late.

At 5 p.m. the troops holding the line between the left flank of the Battalion and Neuf Berquin were heavily attacked and driven back, but the Battalion position remained intact for the time being. Though repeatedly attacked and subjected to the most intense hostile fire, all attacks were repulsed, but as no reinforcements were forthcoming it was decided to shorten the line and hold it from the arm of the canal in Merville across the outskirts of the town, thence due north to the Neuf Berquin-Merville road. The casualties had, however, been so heavy that it was found impossible to do this, and so a space of over five hundred yards between the right flank and the arm of the canal was left unprotected, which some of the 51st Division tried to fill, but all approaches to it being swept by machine-gun fire, every attempt failed, practically every man becoming a casualty. Here Captain F. M. Weeks was killed while endeavouring to rally men and generally adjust the line, and this was the position at 7.30 p.m. when, on it being reported verbally to the Divisional Commander, Major-General H. T. Jackson, he ordered the withdrawal from Merville to the western bank of the River Bourre, north-west of the town, holding the bridge heads. It is interesting, perhaps, to note here how direct communication was established with Divisional Headquarters. Battalion Headquarters was at the time in a house on the eastern side of Merville, and the Battalion signallers took the precaution early of cutting the main civil telephone wires down. They then connected up with those running westward and tried both the Brigade and Divisional calls. An immediate response was given to the Divisional call and Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup spoke direct to Major-General Jackson, giving him the exact situation from time to time during the

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fighting, and it was thus that the orders for the abandoning of Merville were received.

Most careful precautions were taken before the last bridge leading west out of the town was destroyed to ensure that all civilians and troops were clear. At the last moment, however, a light was seen burning in a house and a patrol was sent to search the premises. Here a girl of about twenty-five was found who refused to leave, stating that her fiancé was with the German Regiment attacking the town and she was awaiting his arrival. Time did not permit of any further action being taken as the Germans had now entered the street. Whether she was a spy or not remains unsolved, for the patrol, not wishing to interfere with the civilian population, allowed her to remain.

The withdrawal from Merville was successfully carried out, though the enemy were working forward along the streets towards the bridges and these were only just blown in time, one on the south side of the town being only partially destroyed. A small patrol of the Germans had managed to climb along the river bank and endeavoured to prevent Captain Gwyther, the Brigade-Major, and a Royal Engineer officer from approaching the bridge in the centre of Merville, but they succeeded in crossing and it was destroyed at midnight. All the covering platoons were then withdrawn. Just as this was completed Captain A. V. McLare, in command of the covering platoons, was wounded. Knowing that his wound was fatal, he refused to let his men carry him away, owing to the risk to which this would expose them, and in a few moments he died with the same heroic spirit that had always marked him, a perfect soldier of England. Merville was completely evacuated by 1 a.m. on April 12th.

The remnants of the 6th and 8th Battalions, together with the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (29th Division), then took up a new position along the western bank of the River Bourre on to which, whilst the Battalion was still fighting east of Merville, the left flank had already fallen back and the Germans had entered Robemetz where part of Brigade Headquarters narrowly escaped capture, leaving by the back door of a farm as the enemy entered at the front; though fired on they made good their escape with only one man wounded. At this time the extreme left had even crossed the Bourre, but as a low ridge on the eastern, enemy, side offered a better position for the defence of the flank the stream was recrossed, the men jumping it at a narrow point, some being unfortunate in landing waist-deep. There appeared to be no troops for some distance on the left, and from a mound the Germans could be seen moving in and out of the houses of Neuf Berquin, some of them apparently having consumed a fair amount of liquor looted from the estaminets. Whilst the Battalion was extricating itself from Merville its transport, together with those of the other

Battalions of the Brigade, was on its way forward with rations and ammunition, making for a point previously agreed upon and which was now between the left flank and the Germans. In blissful ignorance of this, and following a road on the extreme left of the Brigade front, the transports passed in the darkness through a gap in the new line and proceeded on their way towards the Germans. Fortunately, however, Captain J. Hutchinson had gone forward after the new line had been organized to search for men who might have been left behind on the Bourre, and thus met Lieutenant Clark and the writer who were leading. No time was lost in beating a retreat, but it was a near thing.

What happened at the bridge-head at the south-west corner of Merville has never been cleared up, but it is thought that the enemy patrols, advancing through the streets on the south side of the town, must have occupied this before the Battalion or any of the 51st Division reached that point, for Lieutenant Green was captured about there and also Lieutenant A. R. Twigg, who had been sent there to meet the G.S.O.2 of the Division.

Gradually the enemy continued to push round to the south of the new position and along the railway, where there appeared to be but very few troops, and by 5 a.m. on April 12th these were practically surrounded, and by 12 noon on the same flank, Le Sart, only a mile or so from the Forêt de Nieppe, was captured and the right of the line, being completely turned, had to be withdrawn. On the left, however, it had been strengthened by two Companies from a Battalion of the Guards Division and here the situation was satisfactory.

By now the Battalion was very disorganized, and the line astride the La Motte-Merville road was composed of mixed-up men of all units of the 50th and 51st Divisions. The Germans continued their pressure on the right and all available men were pushed into the line and it held on. Heavy fighting continued all day, whilst the 5th Division, newly brought back from Italy, dug in behind; this completed, a relief was begun and carried out by 3 a.m. on the 13th, when the Brigade withdrew to the grounds of La Motte chateau in the Forêt de Nieppe, where the remnants of the 50th Division were concentrated, fed and slept.

Though it was the utmost relief to be free at last from the incessant machine-gun fire and shelling of the last four days and all were utterly exhausted, there was much uneasiness felt as to the advisability of concentrating the Division at a point so obvious and well-marked on the map, especially as so many field kitchens had been in position here since before dark and there had been much movement whilst enemy aircraft flew over and over. However, there was no choice, and after a meal all settled down to a sleep, which was roughly

broken at 5 a.m. when the chateau and grounds were heavily shelled. Suddenly awakened, the men scattered in all directions, but casualties were many, the yard of the stables at the north-west corner of the chateau being a shambles. The wounded were carried into the lower rooms of the chateau to be dressed and await removal, and the Battalions ordered to move at once to billets in the farms and cottages behind the forest. Some hours later a number of those reported missing as a result of the shelling were found in the chateau cellars, still sleeping in blissful ignorance of all that had happened.

The scattered personnel of the Battalion was soon reassembled, and after a short march reached its billets.

Here the 9 officers and 158 other ranks, all that remained of the 26 officers and 622 other ranks who had gone into action but four days previously, were immediately organized into one Company under Captain R. H. Wharrier, and as soon as this was complete work was begun on the line of defence being prepared behind the forest.

The quartermaster's stores and transport, which had moved only just in time from Bleu, were now established at Les Ciseaux, but much of the Battalion heavy baggage stored in a Divisional dump at Merris had to be abandoned, for the dump was now almost in the front line, in addition to which it had been looted. Eventually a portion was recovered.

Close to Battalion Headquarters, covering a large open field, was a dump of all kinds of ammunition. This, on the afternoon of April 14th, was fired by a German shell and went up. Fortunately the dump was composed of small heaps at a fair distance apart, and these went up independently and not in bulk, and there were no casualties though the detonations broke every window and scattered the tiles from the roofs of all the houses anywhere near whilst the debris, including whole shells, fell for a very considerable distance away.

On the 15th about thirty casualties, men who had been sick or wounded and were returned from hospital, rejoined, and on the 16th the Battalion marched off at 7.30 a.m. through Steenbecque and Boeseghem to good but scattered billets in Wittes, a short distance from Aire.

On the 17th the Divisional Commander inspected the Battalion and thanked all ranks for the good work they had done in the recent battles.

At Wittes the Battalion was further reorganized, this time into Companies of four platoons of two sections each only, owing to its extreme weakness, thus preparing the framework for the absorbing of the expected drafts to bring it once more up to a fighting strength.

The Company Commanders were now : A Company, Lieutenant J. Stephenson; B Company, Captain R. H. Wharrier; C Company, Lieutenant H. Wilkinson; and D Company, Captain J. Hutchinson.

On the 18th Captain A. Oswell and Captain F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson rejoined, and one new officer reported : Captain T. A. Page (from 7th Battalion).

Training was now begun, musketry and Lewis gun instructors being lent to the Battalion from the staff of the 11th Corps School. This was continued throughout the stay in Wittes. During this period drafts totalling 301 other ranks were received. These were composed of parties from the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, Army Service Corps, Inland Waterways and Transport, and 26th Battalion Durham Light Infantry. The Army Service Corps and Inland Waterways and Transport drafts had had no infantry training prior to joining; the others were, with the exception of twenty-eight nineteen-year-old boys, all old British Expeditionary Force men. In addition Lieutenant A. Montgomery, Second-Lieutenants D. Sloane, N. C. Hatheral and A. McQuiston, all from the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, joined.

On April 24th Lieutenant-General R. B. Haking, C.M.G., D.S.O., commanding the 11th Corps, inspected the Battalion during training.

The 25th was spent in preparation for a move, and at 6.15 a.m. on the 26th the Battalion marched out of Wittes, how many familiar faces were missing, to embus for La Pugnoy on the road leading to Aire. The town of Lillers on the road leading to La Pugnoy had been shelled earlier in the morning, but this had ceased, and La Pugnoy was reached without incident. Here dinners were served and at 4 p.m. the Battalion entrained for the south.

A long journey of nearly two days followed through St. Pol, showing many signs of recent shell-fire, Hesdin, Montreuil, Etaples, Abbeville, Gizors, Pontoise, the outskirts of Paris, and thence through the scenes of the fighting of 1914 during the German advance and retreat, till at 6.30 a.m. on April 28th Savigny was reached and the Battalion detrained. Breakfast was ready here, and then the Battalion marched to a French hutted camp at Arcis-en-Ponsart. The train journey, except for the cramped quarters of the old French carriages and horse-boxes and the fact that no cooking could be done *en route* save for the making of tea, was quite enjoyable. Frequent short halts allowed of the stretching of weary limbs, and the weather being fine and warm, many of the men during daylight travelled on the open trucks conveying the transport wagons. Some of these availed themselves of a halt alongside a French supply train to augment their rations with several loaves of bread.

Since 1914 no British troops had been seen in this part of France

and, in consequence, the inhabitants looked with interest and surprise at the Battalion as it marched past on the way to Arcis-en-Ponsart.

The 50th Division was now, with three other Divisions, attached to the 11th Corps of the Fifth French Army under General Duchene and was the first British Division to be so commanded.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE OF THE AISNE

ON May 1st the Battalion was still in camp at Arcis-en-Ponsart, and during the day the 9th Corps (British) Commander inspected the Brigade which marched past. Three days later preparations for a move began, and at 6.15 a.m. on the 5th, the Battalion set out on its march towards the line, passing through St. Gilles and Fismes, this latter little town still bearing many scars of the 1914 fighting. About midday Glennes, a tiny village tucked away in a deep valley some two miles from the Aisne Canal, was reached, and billets were occupied. As soon as all were settled in, the Commanding Officer, together with all Company Commanders, proceeded to reconnoitre the line in the vicinity of the Craonne Plateau and to arrange the details for the relief of the 73rd Infantry Regiment (French).

On May 7th the Battalion moved forward into the position of reserve to the Brigade, and occupied the semi-ruined village of Chaudardes on the northern bank of the River Aisne, following a route over the hill above Glennes to Concevreux, and thence crossing the Aisne by Bridge 17. As much of the way was under observation the march was carried out in the early hours of the morning, and Chaudardes was reached by 4 a.m. Here the 3rd Battalion of the 73rd Infantry Regiment (French) was relieved.

Chaudardes, in spite of its ruinous state, furnished fairly good accommodation in its buildings which were occupied in preference to the deep dug-outs, of which there were a number. About ten civilians still remained although the village was under observation from the German balloons.

Until May 13th the Battalion continued in reserve, the days being spent in carrying out what little training was possible, reconnoitring the forward area and arranging for relief of the 5th and 6th Battalions (D.L.I.) in the front line.

At this date the Battalion was much below the strength of either of the other two Battalions in the Brigade, for the recent drafts, amounting in all to 217 other ranks, had been composed of Army

Service Corps and Inland Waterways Transport personnel untrained as infantry. It had, therefore, been necessary to send those to a Brigade Training School under Captain A. Oswell, M.C., which had been formed at Arcis-en-Ponsart in April. On the Battalion moving to Glennes, this school had been attached to the 50th Divisional Wing at Crugny.

The sector taken over by the 151st Infantry Brigade was held (at first) with one Battalion in the front line close to the Craonne Plateau, one Battalion in close support in the wood immediately behind, and another in reserve in Chaudardes (but this disposition was altered later, and two Battalions held the front line of the sector and the third Chaudardes in reserve).

In order that the Battalion might hold the front line, it was therefore decided to attach C Company of the 7th Battalion (the Divisional Pioneer Battalion) to it for tactical purposes, and further, A Company was split up, one platoon being sent to each of the other three Companies (B, C, D) to strengthen them, the fourth platoon being retained at Battalion Headquarters.

On May 13th the Battalion paraded at 9 a.m., and the Companies moved up independently to the relief of the 5th Battalion in the front line. B Company was now under command of Captain R. H. Wharrier, M.C., C Company under Captain B. M. Williams, M.C., D Company under Captain J. Hutchinson, whilst the platoon of A Company with Battalion Headquarters was under Captain F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson, Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup, M.C., being in command of the Battalion with Captain J. H. Burrell as Adjutant, the Second-in-Command, Major G. D. Gould, remaining at the detail camp, which together with the quartermaster's store and transport, was in Muscourt, a small village at the foot of the hills south of the Aisne.

The sector held was an interesting one, different in every respect from any held by the Battalion during the previous three years. The Aisne at this point followed a winding course through a fairly wide valley along which also ran the Aisne Canal, with the villages of Maizy and Concevreux on its bank. There were numerous bridges over both the canal and the river. On the south side the hills rose steeply from the canal bank, but to the north of the canal, that is in the direction of the enemy, the ground stretched away for a considerable distance almost a level plain, through which ran the Aisne itself, the ground rising gradually as it approached the Craonne Plateau and the Chemin des Dames, positions recaptured by the French some twelve months previously. Rheims lay about nine miles distant to the south.

From Chaudardes the front line was approached through a very extensive wood, the "Bois de Beau Marais" along the forward edge,

i.e., northern, of which the trenches lay. There were three ways of reaching the trenches, one on the left by following the 60 centimetre railway which ran from Muscourt past Cuiry Chaudardes to about the centre of the wood, thence up the communication trench; a second by taking the road skirting the western edge of the wood, and then following a track through the wood to the communication trench; and a third, only practicable at night or in misty weather by the road from the ruined village of Pontavert up along the south-eastern edge of the wood, almost into the trenches themselves. This latter route was, however, not used by the 151st Infantry Brigade.

On the left of the sector lay the Craonne (or Californie) Plateau with the Chemin des Dames; the huge hog-backed hill of the plateau rising out of the almost tropical growth on its lower slopes afforded excellent observation to either flank, and its retention was of paramount importance. Partly across the left front ran the River Ailette. Echeloned to the right flank of the sector were two small tactical features, Chevreux Hill and Lamoureux Hill. In front of this flank lay the village of Corbeny held by the Germans.

On completion of the relief the dispositions of the Battalion were as follows: D Company held the front line with the exception of Chevreux Hill, which was held by B Company with its platoon from A Company, and from which position posts were pushed forward at night to the Craonne-Corbeny road and withdrawn by day as sentry groups at the top of the hill had a full view of the entire front. B Company was in close support in Lutzow, Chevreux and Lamoureux. Lamoureux Hill was not considered a front line position as the 6th Battalion held posts in the Tr. du Mirage and Tr. de Maritime, and it therefore became a support position, but its garrison could not be used as a mobile reserve. It was, however, an excellent position with a good field of fire over the plains on the right flank as well as to its immediate front. C Company held the reserve line, Ouvrages-de-Fins, Province, Chemin de Fer, and La Corne, a series of redoubts along the northern edge of the wood. The 7th Battalion Company as Brigade Reserve Company held Centre Hoche and Ouvrage Toulon, Battalion Headquarters being in Poste Command Vendée.

The 50th Divisional front was held with three Brigades in the line, 150th on the left, 151st in the centre, and 149th on the right, with the French on both flanks.

The days that followed were quiet, and work on the improvement of the trenches, protection by camouflage screens of those open to view, and deepening where necessary, was carried out. As the maps of the trenches were found to be inaccurate, these, after a careful reconnaissance, were corrected.

After the Battalion had settled down it was decided in order to hasten the training of the drafts at the Brigade School to attach parties of twenty-five from these in turn for six days to the Company in the front line.

As the German trenches were a very considerable distance away, No Man's Land afforded much scope for patrolling even by day. Up to the Battalion taking over the enemy's patrols appeared to have had matters very much their own way, and on the first night even approached to the belt of wire. By assuming an offensive attitude they became less venturesome, and in the end the Battalion patrols became top-dog, pushing forward and reconnoitring the Craonne-Corbeny road and even the tracks leading through the wood beyond it.

On the night of May 22nd the dispositions of the Battalion were altered in order to strengthen the position, for in the north the enemy had delayed the expected resumption of his offensive and lack of definite information as to his intentions, other than abnormal train movement in the south, led to a supposition that the next attack might develop hereabouts. Just at this time, too, an aeroplane observer reported what was suspected to be a concentration of tanks behind the German line in the front of the sector. This point could be seen from the Brigade observation post, but the most careful examination failed to confirm this. Still there was considerable uneasiness felt as to the situation, and in consequence two Companies, instead of one only as hitherto, garrisoned Lamoureux Hill. A large reserve of S.A.A. and iron rations was brought up and distributed at various points throughout the sector. It was ominous, too, that it was stated "that in the event of an attack no reinforcement need be looked for east of the Aisne."

It was then decided to raid the enemy's trench facing the Battalion, with the object of obtaining prisoners for the purpose of identifying the enemy unit holding the front opposite and abstracting information, and on May 25th two platoons of B Company under Lieutenant W. R. Hill, M.C., and Second-Lieutenant D. Sloane (the latter attached to the Battalion from the Royal Irish Rifles), carried it out. The way had been paved for this by the complete mastery of No Man's Land the Battalion patrols had obtained. At 8.30 p.m. the party was in position and set out. On the way two booby-traps were discovered in gaps which had been cut in the farthest belt of wire; these, consisting of wire attached to the strings of two stick bombs and covering the gaps, were destroyed and the party moved on. At 9.10 p.m. a German was observed coming through a gap in the first belt of the enemy's wire. He was followed at intervals of a hundred yards by two other Germans. These were

allowed to proceed, taking a path to the right apparently leading to some post. Second-Lieutenant Sloane, Sergeant Armstrong, and Private Carrington then proceeded to reconnoitre the wire passing through a gap which they began to enlarge from the enemy's side, whilst Lieutenant W. R. Hill, Lance-Corporal N. Holyoake, and Private Stott, cut the wire at their own side, the remainder taking up positions to cover them. Just at this moment a party of sixteen Germans suddenly appeared through the undergrowth and opened fire on the raiding party which retaliated with bombs; three or four of the enemy fell, and the rest retired in disorder. One of the wounded Germans was seized by Second-Lieutenant Sloane and Sergeant Armstrong and rushed to the rear, whilst Lieutenant Hill ran forward, picked up Private Carrington who had been shot through the head, and carried him back. The raiding party thereupon retired through the covering party which held off an attempt at a counter-attack by the enemy. The arranged signal being now sent up, an artillery barrage fell on the German line, and the whole party withdrew without any further casualty. The enemy put up an S.O.S., in reply to which a slight barrage of 4.2 and 77 min. was put down on the left Company front of the Battalion.

The prisoner, who was badly wounded, proved to be a Pole, a Corporal in the 4th Company, 444th I.R., 231st Division. He was willing to speak, and his information appeared to be fairly reliable. He was able to give the "order of battle," i.e., disposition of units, on his front, and also how the front line trenches were held, together with a few details of the organization behind the line.

The day following the raid, May 26th, passed quietly. At 7 p.m., however, a message was received from Brigade Headquarters stating that information had been obtained from a prisoner to the effect that the enemy would attack on morning of May 27th. The preliminary bombardment (gas) would open at 1 a.m., followed by an infantry attack with tanks at 4.30 a.m. And so following on the retreat of the Fifth Army in March and the Battles of the Lawe and Lys in April, the Battalion was to face the third and last desperate attempt of the enemy to break the Allied line. The last fight, too, it proved of the sorely-tried Battalion as such, for the few who survived it were afterwards scattered amongst other and strange units. Yet it was a great end.

The French General Gouraud, in writing later of the British Divisions which served under his command, said, "They have enabled us to establish a barrier against which the hostile masses have beaten and shattered themselves. This none of the French who saw it will ever forget."

All possible preparation made, the Battalion stood to and waited.

From the Brigade observation post, a tree on the eastern edge of the wood, large bodies of the enemy could be seen moving down the Beaurieux-Corbeny road. At times this road appeared to be crowded with troops moving southwards. From 8 p.m. onwards the Divisional artillery, together with some French batteries still in position in the sector, fired on all known approaches until midnight, when a heavy counter-bombardment was opened on the German positions.

Major G. D. Gould was now in command, for Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup, who was ill but had remained at his Headquarters, was ordered by Brigadier-General Martin to hospital during the evening. D Company continued to hold the front line; B Company, together with the 7th Battalion Company, Lamoureux Hill; C Company, the redoubt line; Battalion Headquarters being still in P.C. Vendée. Lieutenant J. Bramwell, Battalion Signalling Officer, was sent to Brigade Headquarters to maintain liaison with the Battalion, and was wounded whilst passing through Pontavert.

Precisely at 1 a.m. on the 27th the German bombardment opened, a storm of fire of great intensity and depth. Gas shells fell over the whole area, but were concentrated particularly on the Battalion and Brigade Headquarters. Within fifteen minutes all communication by telephone with Brigade Headquarters failed and by 2 a.m. also failed forward of Battalion Headquarters to the Companies. Only two of all the runners who endeavoured to reach the Brigade from either of the 6th and 8th Battalions, a distance of about 800 yards, succeeded, and those bearing a message timed 3.30 a.m. only arrived there about 7 a.m.

Soon both the British and French batteries, save for an odd gun or two, were out of action, and except for a slight lull about 3 a.m. there was no cessation of the bombardment until at 4.30 a.m., from the direction of Soissons, the German Infantry attacked the Sixth French Army with twenty-eight Divisions on a front of thirty-five miles.

So far as the Battalion was concerned, the enemy's main advance appeared to come over the plain to the south-east of the position.

By 3.30 a.m. the trenches of D Company, under Captain J. Hutchinson, were completely levelled, only the most forward posts remaining in a condition to be fought. The casualties in these trenches were appallingly heavy.

B Company (with the 7th Battalion Company) on Lamoureux Hill was in little better position, but the few left here were in touch with the enemy, and at 4.30 a.m. still holding out. Captain R. H. Wharrier then called his remaining officers together and they decided to fight to the last.

Not a single officer or man of B and D Companies escaped.

At 5 a.m. Captain B. M. Williams (C Company) reached

Battalion Headquarters in search of reinforcements for his Company, which had been almost annihilated. He was given about forty machine-gunners and a number of men of the 7th Battalion, and with these held for nearly an hour a position along the embankment of the broad gauge railway near to the Ouvrage de Chemin de Fer, where the machine and Lewis guns found excellent targets in the large numbers of Germans who were endeavouring to pass through the wire. Eventually the party, much reduced by shell-fire, was surrounded, only three or four escaping.

The immense wood was an inferno of shell-fire and the echoing wail of rifle and machine-gun bullets. In all parts the Germans appeared in the rear and the battle developed into actions by parties of men of various units collected by individual officers and non-commissioned officers all fighting independently in different localities. Brigadier-General C. Martin was killed by a shell outside his Headquarters in the wood in the midst of a party of Germans who had surrounded the dug-outs, some of whom also fell victims to the same shell. A short distance behind here a solitary gun of a six-inch howitzer battery, served by an officer and one gunner who alone remained, was still firing and only ceased when the Germans reached within fifty yards, when, removing the breech block, these two retired with a few of the Brigade Headquarters personnel.

At 8 a.m. a stand was made in an existing trench running from a point about three hundred yards due east of Cuiry Chaudardes (not Chaudardes, but another village a short distance north) to a farm north-east of Beaurieux by a party of survivors collected by Lieutenant-Colonel Birchall (7th D.L.I.) and Major Gould until taken in the rear by the enemy from Beaurieux. These then fought their way through, crossed the Aisne, and took up a position on the high ground south of Bridge 17.

On hearing the bombardment Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup left the Ambulance Station to which he had been taken and reached Chaudardes, where he collected a party of about one hundred and fifty, composed of men of the 5th Battalion Durham Light Infantry, 5th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers and Machine Gunners, and with it held a position in front of the village, being gradually forced back to the line of the railway immediately behind and eventually withdrawing from here over the Aisne and establishing a line in front of Concevreux, in touch with the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers on the right and the 6th Durham Light Infantry on the left in front of Concevreux.

Whilst the struggle for Chaudardes was in progress and the bridge at its western entrance was already under both rifle and machine-gun fire, in spite of which a sapper sergeant was endeavour-

ing to fix a demolition charge, out of the village and over the bridge into safety came at full gallop a field kitchen belonging to the 5th Battalion (D.L.I.) on which, held by two men, lay a wounded officer.

The position along the Aisne Canal in front of Concevreux appeared one that might be held, especially as a fresh Battalion from the 25th Division now came up and strengthened the line which followed the bank as far as Maizy to the north-west. Major Cleghill, the G.S.O.2 of the 50th Division, now arrived in Concevreux and ordered an amalgamation of the whole of the 50th Division troops to be known as 149th/151st Infantry Brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup, who held command till the arrival of Lieutenant-Colonel F. Walton (6th D.L.I.), to whom he handed over.

From Concevreux could be seen the late Headquarters of the 50th Division in Beaurieux, now burning fiercely, and the German Infantry crossing the valley from the hills beyond. By the bridge at Maizy stood an agitated sapper officer watching the enemy draw nearer and nearer whilst he waited the order, which never came, to destroy it. At length an infantry officer took the matter into his own hands and the charges were blown, but with little result, for the bridge was of concrete and iron as it also carried the 60 centimetre railway. The hills echoed every shot, and the sharp "tap" of the firing of each rifle was followed by the softer "tack" of the echo, and save for the unpleasant reminder of the enemy bullets, it was for all the world like the firing on a range at home, the similarity being heightened by the appearance of the men lying along the slope of the canal embankment. The enemy artillery fire was appreciably light at this time and the reason was soon apparent, for from Craonne and from Beaurieux came at a "walk-march" two long snake-like columns of guns and limbers, both converging on Maizy. In front of Concevreux a German battery wheeled into a field and came into action in the open. It was near the bridge at Concevreux that Lieutenant Bigg of the Battalion was killed.

By 2.30 p.m. this new line was outflanked both on the right and left, the Germans on the latter flank having succeeded in effecting a crossing in the vicinity of Maizy, and it was then decided to withdraw and hold the trench system on the forward slopes of the hill south of Concevreux. This was occupied with the 3rd Worcesters on the right, the 149th/151st Infantry Brigade in the centre, then a slight gap on the left, beyond which the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers continued the line.

This new position was heavily shelled until 5 p.m. when, owing to the continued advance of the Germans up the valley on the left to the heights above Muscourt, a retirement was made to Hill 200, north of Ventelay, the 3rd Worcesters being still on the right, and

the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers on the left. Here, an hour later, Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson (5th D.L.I.) took over command, and at 8 a.m. on May 28th, Lieutenant-Colonel Walton and Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup received orders at Divisional Headquarters at Brancourt to collect stragglers south of Jonchery. Of these a party of about forty was collected from various units of the 8th, 21st, 25th, and 50th Divisions, and with them Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup was ordered to hold a hill about a mile to the south of Jonchery where, at 9.15 p.m., a party of a hundred from the Divisional Wing joined, and the position was extended. A further party of three hundred was also on its way up from the Divisional Wing, and Lieutenant-Colonel Walton set out to meet this, retiring at 11.30 a.m. with about one hundred and twenty, all from Durham Light Infantry Battalions, under Lieutenant Frazer, but by this time the approaches to the hill being under enemy observation and all movement shelled, and the situation on the left having further developed, it was decided to hold a position about half a mile to the south-west with these. The remainder of the expected three hundred from Yorkshire Battalions did not arrive, being employed elsewhere.

At 10 a.m. the enemy attacked Jonchery in force, and about 11.30 a.m. the troops of the 8th and 25th Divisions, together with the Brigade Commanders of the 23rd and 74th Infantry Brigades, withdrew to the line held by the parties under Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup.

The enemy was successfully held up from making a frontal attack on the hill, but was able to work up the Vaudeuil Valley and occupied the hills north-east of Vaudeuil, from which position he developed a machine-gun barrage, and his field-guns also fired intermittently with great accuracy on Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup's position, which was held until 4.30 p.m., by which time Vaudeuil itself had fallen into the German hands, and they were advancing through a wood half a mile south of that place. The Commander of the 23rd Infantry Brigade, who had assumed command of all the troops, decided to withdraw and occupy the high ground, one and a half miles north-east of Savigny on both sides of the Savigny-Jonchery road. The withdrawal was carried out by successive stages, Lieutenant-Colonel Walton and Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup being ordered to organize the defence of Hill 233 near a farm on the road with troops from the 8th and 50th Divisions. About seventy men of the 50th Division held the east side of the road, continuing the line to a trench on the right. Hill 233 was repeatedly attacked by the Germans, but each time they were beaten off, although on one occasion the troops withdrew the line was immediately restored. A Company of French advanced on the left at dusk and pushed forward patrols to the left of the hill, so securing that flank, but by

this time the enemy appeared to have worked nearly as far round to the south as Crugny. Hill 233 was held all the night of 28/29th May in spite of attempts on the part of the enemy to push patrols through the line.

Throughout the 29th and 30th the enemy continued to push forward, and a gradual withdrawal took place through Poilly, Sarcy, and Chamuzy. On the evening of the latter day Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup was ordered to report the following day to the 50th Division Headquarters in Vert-la-Gravelle, west of the Marne.

In the meantime Lieutenant J. Stephenson of the 8th Battalion, who had been commanding the 50th Divisional Lewis gun school at Revillon, had come into action at 11 a.m. on May 27th with his command, together with all odd men he could collect, and was engaged in the fighting between the villages of Revillon, Glennes, Morval, and Fismes, reaching this latter place at about 3 p.m. the same day. Here he was ordered to Villers-Argon to join the transport, but on the 30th with about thirty men of the Battalion, again moved forward as part of a Composite Battalion of the 50th Division under Major Stead, which remained in the forward area until June 17th.

The Battalion transport had a very trying experience. After delivering rations as usual on the evening of the 26th they stood by in readiness, and though Muscourt, where the lines, quartermaster's store, and details lay, was shelled throughout the night, they remained here until 10 a.m. on the 27th, when, as the German infantry approached Maizy at the foot of the small valley, they moved up the hill behind in the direction of Baslieux, losing two men and five horses from shell-fire. The Battalion band following in the rear of the transport had a narrow escape just as they reached the crest of the hill, a shell falling almost in their midst without causing a single casualty. Baslieux they reached at 3 p.m., but as the enemy were approaching here from Glennes, a move was made to Fismes, which was under shell-fire as they passed through, and here Sergeant Armstrong, who, after the raid of May 25th, had been sent down to the transport lines for a rest, was killed by a shell which burst near the wagon on which he was riding. He had served with the Battalion ever since April, 1915.

When clear of Fismes a halt was made at 8 p.m., between St. Gilles and Dravegny for the night, the wagons being drawn off the road under cover of some trees in a valley.

At 2.30 a.m. on the 28th, a composite ration convoy, under Lieutenant N. Clark, left for Montigny, proceeding via St. Gilles, Crugny, and Savigny, to about a kilometre north-east of Jonchery, reaching here at 7 a.m. Owing to the continued advance of the

enemy, the convoy was ordered south of Jonchery and to form ration and ammunition dumps in and about that village. Further dumps were also formed on the road leading from Jonchery to Savigny, near to which place Lieutenant N. Clark was wounded by a shell splinter, but carried on for a day or two, subsequently being sent into hospital. On completing the dumps the convoy was ordered to Vizilly, where it rejoined the main body of the Brigade transport.

After the composite convoy had moved off on the morning of May 28th the remaining transport marched back into the old lines in the camp at Arcis-en-Ponsart and settled down for a rest whilst awaiting orders. This was very brief, for hardly had the horses been loosed out than a rattle of machine-gun and rifle fire broke out on a hill across the valley, and less than a mile away could be seen French infantry retiring down the slopes into the valley below. Within a few minutes the transport was on its way to some other resting-place. Vizilly was reached at 1 p.m., and here a halt was made, but towards evening, as a precaution, moved farther on through Villers-Argon, leaving a small party in Vizilly to give warning of any developments. This party left hurriedly during the night as the result of the retirement of a French detachment through the village.

At 9 a.m. on the 29th orders were received for an immediate move to Montigny, two kilometres east of Chatillon, but on reaching Olizy et Violanes-Cuisles further orders were received to cross the Marne at Chatillon and push on to Igny.

Little information was vouchsafed as to the reason for this sudden change in destination, but it was understood that the situation was very critical.

At Chatillon only one bridge crossed the Marne, and on the road leading to it and even in the fields on either side for some distance was assembled the whole of the transport of the 50th Division. At the west end of the bridge French reserves were detraining, and those being given priority in the use of the bridge, this was only open for the passage of transport during the few minutes' interval between the arrival and crossing of each body of troops. In consequence but few vehicles could pass over at a time. In five hours the column moved a distance of barely one hundred yards. Impatient at the delay and anxious at the thought of possible capture, for already some of the French troops who had marched up the road but a short time before were returning wounded, whilst parties of German prisoners fresh from the fighting were being brought down, and the risk of aerial attack, one of the Brigade staff reconnoitred the river bank to the south and at Reuil, two and a half miles below Chatillon, discovered a bridge of pontoons. As soon as the head of the 151st Infantry Brigade Transport reached the branch road leading

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to Reuil it turned off from the main column and had soon crossed to Oeully, thence passing through Chêle la Reine and Festigny, arrived at Igny-le-Jard at 2 a.m. on the 30th. Twelve hours later the march was continued, until at 7 p.m. a halt was made for the night south-west of Suizy. At 9.30 a.m. on the 31st orders were received to proceed via Montmort, Etoges, Toulon les Montaigne to Vert-la-Gravelle where the remnants of the Division were being concentrated.

Accommodation was taxed to the utmost in the village, and for the most part bivouacs in orchards were the rule, but, apart from the troublesome mosquitoes, these were preferable in the heat of June to billets indoors.

On June 1st the work of forming a Composite Battalion from the remains of the Brigade was begun. This, known as the 151st Infantry Brigade Composite Battalion, was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel F. Walton (6th D.L.I.), with Major G. D. Gould as Second-in-Command. All available men of the 8th Battalion formed a Company of this under Captain B. M. Williams. The work of organization was continued until the evening of the 5th, when the Composite Battalion moved by bus up into the forward area, leaving Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup with Lieutenant J. F. Hobson and Lieutenant and Quartermaster W. McBeath and one hundred and four other ranks at Vert-la-Gravelle. The strength of the Company of the Composite Battalion was one hundred and sixty-one non-commissioned officers and men, the officers with Captain Williams being Lieutenant A. H. Robinson, Lieutenant Martin, lent from 6th Battalion, and Second-Lieutenant Fox, lent from the 151st Trench Mortar Battery.

The Composite Battalion proceeded as far as Cormoyeux in buses, and from there marched to Nanteuil, bivouacking in a wood to the east of the village, the Brigade Interpreter, Monsieur Henri Pesle, accompanying it to arrange the details of a relief of the French, but on the 6th a move instead was made to Bas Decourtin, and the Battalion then took over the line on Montaigne de Bligny from the 9th Cheshires, the 8th Battalion Company being in reserve. It was a very bad relief. June the 7th was a quiet day, although both Battalion Headquarters and the 8th Battalion Company were slightly shelled. After dusk on June 8th the 149th and the 150th Infantry Brigade's Composite Battalions both side-stepped to the left, and the 151st Battalion moved back into reserve at Chamuzy. The details of the earlier 50th Division Composite Battalion now rejoined their own units, Lieutenant J. Stephenson with sixteen other ranks joining the 8th Battalion Company.

On June 9th the 151st Battalion was allocated the position of counter-attack Battalion and the 8th Battalion Company occupied a

series of posts to the north-west of Chamuzy. The whole of the Battalion area was under observation of the enemy both from the ground and balloons, but after dark it was possible to do cooking in the village.

On the 10th, in consequence of movement on the roads, the enemy shelled the position all day with 5.4 and 4.2 howitzers, but the posts being very scattered, casualties were only light.

Rumours of an attack under a gas bombardment caused extra vigilance at dawn on the 11th, but though heavy shelling continued all day no infantry attack was developed against the position.

On June 12th Captain Williams was slightly wounded, but remained on duty, and at night the 58th Composite Battalion relieved the position, the relief being complete by dawn on the 13th, and the 151st Battalion then moved back into a bivouac in the Bois de Courton, all being settled in by 6 a.m. on the 13th. During the afternoon the men bathed and were issued with much needed clean clothing. The Battalion was now in Divisional Reserve.

June 14th was a fine day, and some training was carried out in the wood whilst the officers reconnoitred the counter-attack routes.

The Battalion remained in the Bois de Courton until June 18th, when Marshal Foch launched the great counter-offensive which led to victory. On this day officers of the 2nd Regiment, 8th Division, Italian Army, came round at 9.30 a.m., and in the evening the position was relieved by this regiment, and the Battalion marched to the Bois de Gouppin, entraining the following morning at 5.30 for Broyes, where all personnel rejoined their original units.

After the 151st Composite Battalion had left Vert-la-Gravelle on June 5th the details of the 8th Battalion continued training under Lieutenant-Colonel Kirkup until the 8th, when they moved to Broyes where, on the return of the 151st Composite Battalion on the 19th, all the Battalions of the Brigade were together for the first time since the attack of May 27th.

On June 20th, as a precautionary measure, a new 151st Composite Battalion was formed at Broyes, this time under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup, with Lieutenant J. Stephenson commanding the 8th Battalion Company. Captain B. M. Williams now took over the details 154 strong.

It was now known that the 50th Division was shortly to be reduced to cadre, for owing to the great losses it was found impracticable to reform the Battalions at this time. It was understood at first, however, that this was but a temporary measure and that eventually the Battalions would be restored to full establishment.

On June 23rd the details of the Division moved to Les Esarts,

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leaving a Composite Brigade at Broyes. At both these places training continued. On the 30th the details returned to Broyes.

At 5 p.m. on July 2nd the Battalion marched off to St. Sophie Farm, a prisoners of war camp, as staging area *en route* for Fere Champenoise, where on the day following entrainment took place at 3.30 p.m. After a journey of a little over twenty-four hours Longpré was reached, and from here the Battalion marched fourteen miles to Doudelainville, near Abbeville, arriving at 11.15 p.m. and finding very excellent billets.

CHAPTER XIV.

REDUCTION TO TRAINING CADRE AND DEMOBILIZATION

ON July 6th at Doudelainville the actual orders were received for the reduction of the Battalion to a training establishment or cadre, 10 officers, 6 warrant officers, 4 Company quartermaster-sergeants, 15 sergeants and 26 rank and file. In making a selection of those to form the training cadre the oldest serving members of the Battalion were retained as far as possible. All surplus personnel were held in readiness for despatch to the base.

On July 11th the Battalion paraded for the farewell address of Major-General H. T. Jackson, for though the training cadre still remained under the 50th Division for administration the surplus personnel were to leave for the base on the 15th. At this parade Medal Ribands were presented to various members of the Battalion.

The 188 other ranks surplus to the new establishment left for the base at 5 p.m. on the 15th, entraining at Pont Remy. The band and bugles, however, were still at Divisional Headquarters, having been sent there on the 10th for practice for a ceremonial parade to be held in Dieppe on the 14th. Later on authority was given for the retention of the bandmaster and nineteen bandsmen.

On July 18th the transport of the cadre proceeded to Dieppe.

At Doudelainville the cadre was employed in training until July 19th when, together with the other cadres of the 28th and 50th Divisions, it moved to a camp at Rouxmesnil about two miles from Dieppe. Hardly any arrangements had been made for it here, there being only a canvas camp with very limited accommodation.

The Headquarters of the Division at Martin Église, some two miles farther east, took over on the 11th nine Battalions (Regular and Service) sent to France from Salonika, all suffering from malaria. To these most of the cadres were attached for the time being.

The whole of the 50th Division cadres were now placed under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Wilkinson, D.S.O., of the 4th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment; they came directly under the Divisional Headquarters for administration, their late Brigade Headquarters now only functioning so far as the new Battalions composing their Brigades were concerned.

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On July 23rd Major Gould was sent to the 1st Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment as Second-in-Command.

Training was continued at Rouxmesnil.

August 4th, being the fourth anniversary of the Declaration of War, was marked by a special church parade. During the afternoon the combined bands and bugles of the 6th and 8th Battalions played on the sea-front at Dieppe. At the end of the programme the massed bugles sounded Retreat, and the whole was greatly appreciated by the French.

On August 6th Regimental Sergeant-Major E. Wise reverted at his own request to Company Sergeant-Major and was succeeded as Regimental Sergeant-Major by Company Sergeant-Major Bradley, who had recently joined the 6th Battalion from the 4th.

On the 8th Lieutenant D. H. Farquharson was appointed Adjutant vice Captain J. H. Burrell, taken prisoner on the Aisne on May 27th.

Orders were received on August 14th for the transfer of the 50th Division cadres to the 38th Division and to be employed in the training of officers at the base depots. Up to the present they had been engaged in the training of American officers, but this had now ceased to be necessary. In consequence the Quartermaster, Captain W. McBeath, proceeded to Rouen to take over temporary camps pending the erection of special training camps, and on the 15th of August the cadres of the 151st Infantry Brigade left Rouxmesnil for Rouen, those of the 149th and 150th Infantry Brigades proceeding to Havre and Etaples respectively. The Battalion cadre entrained at 3 p.m., and the journey was protracted until 7.35 a.m. on the 16th owing to the bombing by enemy aircraft of Rouen and the vicinity of the station. After detraining breakfast was served in the station and the cadre then marched to a camp near the Cyclist Base Depot, Bruyeres Camp, on the south-east side of Rouen. Here they came under the command of the 117th Infantry Brigade, 39th Division. The 39th Division at this time was commanded by Major-General C. A. Blacklock, C.M.G., D.S.O., and the 117th Infantry Brigade by Brigadier-General G. A. Armitage, C.M.G., D.S.O.

On the departure of the cadre from the 50th Division the following letter of farewell was received from the Divisional Commander :

TO THE OFFICER COMMANDING,

8TH BATTALION THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY.

It is with the deepest regret that I hand over the command of the Battalions which originally constituted the 50th Division.

The time during which these Battalions have been under my command has been a short but stirring one.

Three times—on the Somme, the Lys and the Aisne—the 50th Division had to bear the full brunt of the German attack, and each time they fought most gallantly against great odds. Previous to this in the Second Battle of Ypres, on the Somme in 1916, at Arras and again at Ypres, the 50th Division had made a glorious name for itself.

For the time being, through no fault of yours, your Battalion is to remain as a cadre, but this cadre will keep alive the traditions and esprit de corps of the Battalion, and when the time comes for it to be made up I know that the new Battalion will worthily live up to those traditions.

I hope that at some future date I may again have the honour of having your Battalion under my command.

In the meanwhile good-bye and the best of luck to all ranks.

H. T. JACKSON, *Major-General,*
Commanding 50th Division.

HEADQUARTERS, 50TH DIVISION,
13th August, 1918.

August passed into September with the daily work of training; all non-commissioned officers and men who could be spared from this being employed in assisting the Royal Engineers on the construction of a new camp on the Champs de Manœuvre.

On September 4th Lieutenant F. V. Perrott, who had been wounded whilst previously serving with the Battalion, rejoined from the 15th Battalion (D.L.I.), and on the 20th Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin, recovered from his wound of March, arrived from England and reassumed command, Captain J. Stephenson leaving the same day to fill the appointment of Adjutant to the 2/6th Battalion (D.L.I.).

On October 9th Captain J. F. Hobson proceeded to England to attend the 12th Instructors' Course at Aldershot; a week later Captain A. Oswald was appointed Adjutant to the 49th Battalion Machine-Gun Corps, and was transferred to that Corps.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin vacated command on the 23rd October, leaving to command the 1st Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, being succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Tabor from the 8th Battalion Essex Regiment, and Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup proceeded to the base at Etaples, whence he was sent up to the front to command the 7th Battalion Border Regiment.

And so with the last few days of the war, one by one the few yet remaining of the old 8th Battalion drifted away. On November 4th orders for the complete demobilization of the cadre as from November 6th were received; accounts were then closed, stores packed and handed over. The band was despatched to Dieppe on the same day,

and surplus other ranks to Etaples on the 7th. Lieutenant-Colonel Tabor returned to England and Captains J. Bramwell and Robinson left to join No. 1 Young Soldiers' Battalion on the 8th, their departure followed by those of Captain and Adjutant Farquharson to the 15th Battalion (D.L.I.) on the 9th and Captains B. M. Williams and F. V. Perrott to the 11th Battalion Somerset Regiment on the 14th.

The War Diary makes no mention of November 11th and the Armistice. Perhaps to the few lonely officers and men then remaining at Rouen it brought no immediate realization of change, cessation of strain or sense of freedom from the daily chance of life and death, and no silence such as fell upon those in action that day at 11 a.m., a silence comparable only to that which seemed to follow for a moment the sudden close of a barrage.

After a time there came to those in action at the end, even to those back in the base camps far behind the line, a great loneliness as there crept into their thoughts the memories of so many who had shared much with them in the years of the war and were not there to share the victory.

By November 18th the final handing over of stores, tentage and transport to the base commandant had been completed. Captain McBeath then proceeded to Calais, the others to Etaples and No. 2 Young Soldiers' Battalion.

And so, with the passing of the Battalion, its story, in so far as one man may tell the tale of others, is ended.

CHAPTER XV.

TRENCH WARFARE

THE term "Trench Warfare" was applied to those periods during the war when both the Allies and the Germans faced one another in permanent trench systems, week after week and month after month without movement other than here and there, local aggressions by one side or the other wherein some portion of the line changed hands for a time at least.

In these trench systems a regular routine of existence was maintained, spells of duty in the front line or in reserve varied by reliefs and periods of recuperation in villages or camps a short distance behind the line and longer rests, after a particularly trying time, away back in the rest areas.

The trenches seemed a world in themselves with the great world of every day, and all one's previous life far away like part of some other existence. The days passed but slowly, some full of dreariness itself, activity limited by the few feet of trench boards or mud in each bay, one's horizon a rough outline of sand-bag parapet against the sky, a hurried survey of No Man's Land and the enemy's line beyond, or through the openings in the parados of the silent deserted fields with ruined villages and farms or a desolate waste, stretching away into the far distance where lay the little island which held all one's thoughts.

From utter stagnation the mind was only saved by the ceaseless presence of danger, the morning and the evening "hate," the watching for something to happen, work on the improvement of the trenches, writing of letters home, the looking forward to being relieved, and above all else to the next leave, so many days, weeks or months ahead. Yet in every trench and under all conditions there existed a cheerfulness, unselfishness and kindness to a degree rarely found in any other walk of life.

The strain of Open Warfare is great, physically and mentally, but there is movement with consequent relief to the mind. This factor is absent in Trench Warfare when confined to a few yards of a

bay, as day succeeds day, one stands and waits where but yesterday fell the sudden shell and the friends of many days are no more.

Days there were, however, which were full of incident, varying with the part of the front held, heavy bombardments with resultant casualties and damage to the trenches which had to be made good when night came. The dodging of "Minnies" or "rum jars," troublesome snipers to deal with, visits from the Brigadier or some of the Divisional Staff which entailed a more than usually careful "spring cleaning" of the trenches and preparation of replies for all questions it was thought likely might be asked and, as was possible in most parts of the "old front line," the excitement of a rat hunt, for which purpose almost every Battalion had its "pack of hounds" of many breeds. These in time so multiplied that it was rumoured that it had become necessary for the issue of an order limiting the number of dogs per Division to sixty.

The nomenclature of the trenches, for each had its name or was numbered, was interesting, and it was often easy by these names to identify the Regiments, Battalions of which had constructed and held the trenches in a sector. In the Sanctuary Wood sector was "Mount Sorrell," evidently the name bestowed upon that strong-point by some Leicestershire Battalion. During the occupation of this sector by the 50th Division "Mount Sorrell" became familiarly known as "Canney Hill," though still officially shown on the maps and described in documents by its original title. Here also were "Stirling Castle," a German position, "Glasgow Cross" and "Gourock Road" amongst others, without doubt the handiwork of some Scots. In this area, too, lay "Lovers' Lane"! The system of trenches in front of Kemmel Hill entered from Lindenhoeke was plainly the work of some London Division, for here one walked up or down "Regent Street" and "Piccadilly" or even strolled along "Pall Mall." A little to the north of these lay the "Via Gellia," a communication trench entered from Kemmel Village, a name perpetuating surely the memory, out of the thoughts of some man of Derbyshire, of the well-known road built in that shire by Mr. Chandos Gell. At Armentières the "trade-mark" of the Scots once more appeared in "Leith Walk" and "Lothian Avenue." It was in this sector that some humorist had erected a sign in the form of a finger-post bearing the direction "To Blighty" at the end of an advanced breast-work trench which was open to "No Man's Land." The Durham Light Infantry marked its stay in the neighbouring sector of Houplines by leaving there Durham Avenue and Durham Castle. A multitude of Regiments seemed to have had a hand in the making of the Houplines system, for Gloucester Avenue led one through Pretoria Road to South Africa and the front line, or for a change one could walk along Irish, Cambridge or Wessex

Avenues or through Derby and Rifle Alleys. Even "The Mall" was here and "Petty Cury."

Often some circumstance, peculiarity or individual decided the title of a trench or much used locality, for at Vierstraat we have "Dead Dog Farm," "Chicory and Poppy Lanes," and "Stuart" Trench, so named after Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Stuart, G.S.O.I of the 50th Division who, whilst inspecting the construction of this trench with the Staff Captain one evening after dark, was struck by a random bullet and died in a few minutes. In this same sector ran the "Milky Way" past a *laiterie* (dairy) whence it derived its name.

The Somme with its multitude of trenches, although occupied for a few hours only and by many units in quick succession, carried on the custom. The names of these most familiar to those of the Battalion who fought in and over them will be, Clarke's Trench, Hook and Eye Trenches, Swansea and 6th Avenue, Crescent Alley, the Starfish Line, Prue Trench, The Pimple, Pioneer Alley and Snag Trench.

At Arras a sportsman had surely had the naming of the trenches in the right sector of the Divisional front. Here were to be found "Shikar Avenue" with "Lion and Tiger Trenches," "Wren, Buzzard, Mallard and Duck Trenches," "Cuckoo Reserve," "Egret Loop," "The Nest" and a host of others. In the left sector, north of the Cojeul were Cavalry Farm, Hoe, Shovel, Rake, Key, Lock and Tool Trenches.

The same system was adopted with regard to much used corners and cross-roads behind the line, such as "Hell-Fire Corner," not far from the Menin Gate; "Shrapnel Corner," on the way from Ypres to Railway Dug-outs and to The Bluff; "Hyde Park Corner," at one time "Canada Corner," near Locre; "Hallebast," commonly pronounced "Hellblast" Corner between Dickebusch and La Clytte; "White Hope Corner" near Boesinghe; "Dirty Bucket," "Seven Dials" and "International" Corners behind Elverdinghe. These greatly helped in finding one's way about.

Even the "pill-boxes" in the Salient after capture from the Germans received their names with a baptismal ceremony of shell-fire. Pascal Farm, Israel House, Egypt House, Berlin, Seine and Tyne Cot will all be remembered.

Perhaps the most brilliant effort in the direction of thus labelling places was that of the individual responsible for the naming of three new stations on the railway running between Proven and St. Omer by way of Bergues and Rousbrugge. At these three points were established a casualty clearing station, a more or less convalescent hospital, and a munition dump. For these the names

evolved following the usual Flemish form were "Mendinghem," "Dozinghem" and "Strafinghem" respectively.

In the early days of the state of Trench Warfare, the supply of hand bombs, like the shells for the artillery, was precarious. The main supply was made from the tins which had contained the ration jam. These were religiously collected when empty and returned to be filled with explosive and scraps of metal. They were fitted with a fuse of nine seconds' duration, after the lighting of which, in accordance with the distance of the German trench into which they were to be hurled, it was necessary to count slowly, possibly up to five, before throwing in order to avoid the eventuality of them arriving in the German trench before the nine seconds had elapsed, thus permitting time for them to be returned. As at this period most of the jam appeared to come from Ticklers Limited, these bombs were known as "Ticklers Artillery." Other bombs in use about this time were the stick bomb somewhat resembling the later Rifle Grenades, and the Cricket Ball and Hair Brush Patterns; all had an unfortunate habit of failing to distinguish between friend and foe.

Communication in an established trench system would hardly be expected to be a matter of difficulty but often it proved so. The Battalion signal section, who, though like everyone else were frequently cursed, were real good fellows, their work especially under fire being beyond all praise. They were responsible for the upkeep of the telephone cables forward from Battalion Headquarters to the front line companies, etc.

The amount of telephone cable used on the Western front must have almost equalled the amount of barbed wire adorning it. Some of the communication trenches were almost reveted with cable, both of the infantry and artillery, many of course being obsolete. The cables had a very annoying habit of straying across the trench, especially on a dark night, thereby causing disaster to many a heavily laden ration party, and the use of much fervid language. When, as occasionally happened, a cable across the junction of two trenches removed the hat of the General Officer Commanding, the stock of paper in the Brigade Office was appreciably decreased. The telephones, if often a worry to the Adjutant and Company Commanders trying to snatch a few minutes' sleep, always enabled many an awkward question to be avoided and a reply postponed, allowing for time to concoct a satisfactory answer by the line going "diss," accidentally or otherwise at the critical or most inconvenient moment as the case might be.

One other evil from which Headquarters frequently suffered was the "teeing in" by some other unit using the same communication trench, whose linesmen, to save themselves trouble, used the same cable already in position and laying on to it at the most convenient part a

line to their own Headquarters. This was all right till the two, or more, units wished to talk at the same moment.

As the war went on the Germans established "listening sets" in most parts of their line and were found to pick up vital information by this means from incautious conversations and even from Morse messages. Various other methods of communication were therefore introduced, such as Lucas lamps, Fuller phones and pigeons. In relation to these latter there was a story that during one of the attacks on the Somme in 1916 information as to its progress was being anxiously awaited at Corps Headquarters. There was great excitement when at last a pigeon was seen to enter its loft. The message it carried was quickly secured and opened in haste. It bore only the words, "I'm tired of carrying this damned bird."

Quite a flutter was caused in the line near Arras in July, 1917, by the report of the discovery in an old German trench in front of Cherisy of part or the whole of a German listening set, the early description of which before it was fully unearthed being that it was a framework of wires. The news was passed by Battalion to Brigade, Brigade to Division and Division to Corps, back from whom came the order that it was to be carefully removed and sent down for examination of experts who were too precious to be allowed to approach the trenches for the purpose. Crossing with this order from the Corps came the later information from the Battalion to the effect that on being dug out the contrivance was found to be an old spring mattress.

In order to prevent the frequent leakage of information, developments in the use of codes took place. In 1916 code letters for Battalions, followed later by code names such as Black, Enid, etc., all of which were frequently changed, but the most nearly perfect, if the most annoying, system was ultimately evolved in the B.A.B. code contained in a small yellow-backed book of some fifty pages. Simple enough, it consisted of groups of figures representing phrases covering everything that could be imagined was likely to occur even in this war of wars. Every few days a key figure or figures to be added to each group when used was issued to cover any possible use of a captured copy by the Germans. The dire penalties which threatened the loss of one of these codes added many a grey hair to those responsible for its safe keeping whenever a copy was mislaid.

Another bug-bear in the life of the trenches was the early morning "situation report," which had to be rendered daily at a set time whether there was anything to report or not. Usually it was late and as often as not contained many terminological inexactitudes. For a time the words "situation normal" covered an uneventful night till at length a G.S.O.1 arrived at Divisional Headquarters to whom the

expression carried no meaning. "Normal," he would say, "what is normal in war? To me it might mean that you were fighting all night, that being the normal state of affairs, or you might have been having a good night's sleep as the normal procedure on your front." And so it passed and the Battalion Intelligence Officer was hard put to at times to find something when there was nothing. The direction of the wind was useful but unreliable, as it seemed to vary with each different Battalion in the line, and a north wind from one unit and a south wind from another were hard to reconcile at Brigade Headquarters, and so whatever might be its direction at the time near the Brigade went on in the collated report to the Division.

The necessary work of improvement of the trenches or the construction of strong points was the cause of a very unpopular fatigue for the Battalion in support or reserve, necessitating many hours in the night being spent carrying duck boards, V frames, revetting material and barbed wire. The point of view taken by the sufferers is well illustrated by the remark of a man of the 7th Battalion overheard on the Menin Road. Staggering along under his load on the broken ground, he exclaimed in disgust as he halted for a rest, "Durham Light Infantry?—Engineers' navvies!"

Working parties were not only confined to the Battalions in the rear of the trenches. The Battalion holding the front line also had its parties to find for various matters, as for instance when, prior to the days of the iron corkscrew posts for the barbed wire entanglements, wooden stakes were used. Then would come a spell of dry weather and the long rank grass of No Man's Land became like tinder, and it occurred to some thoughtful person behind that if the wind was favourable the Germans might fire the grass, which would then burn these stakes and destroy the belt of wire protecting the trenches. So out in front at night, armed with usually blunt sickles had to go working parties to cut a wide belt of the grass along the immediate edge of the wire, screened by a few men farther out in the direction of the German trenches. Constantly having to lie flat on the evil-smelling ground whenever an enemy flare went up one's hands and clothes smelt for hours afterwards of the odour of decaying bodies with which the grass seemed impregnated. Whilst this was happening others were carrying up rations, etc., from the dump, and during 1915, when man-power was low, there were often only some two or three left in a trench as sentries.

During the summer months the flies and mosquitoes (to say nothing of the other insects which from their abodes in the seams of a man's trousers and shirt preyed day and night on him), whilst, of course, not comparable with the plagues of these in the Eastern theatres of war, were nevertheless almost unbearable. The flies were

as large as bluebottles, being gorged with decaying matter and swarmed everywhere. In Trench 69 of the Armentières system in July, 1915, the officer on duty whilst patrolling his trench observed a man asleep on the fire step. His mouth, which was open, appeared very black, and out from it, disturbed by the movement of the man suddenly awaking, came a small cloud of these flies. In the same trench a loaf of bread placed in a small recess in the parapet was observed in a few moments to become entirely hidden from view by the crowd of flies which settled on it so that it resembled a lump of coal. The mosquitoes even in the villages behind the line were more than troublesome, for their poisonous bites raised very painful swellings in a few moments and they penetrated everywhere. Bitten on the lips, these became like a negro's, whilst often the head was so swollen as to make it difficult to wear one's hat.

CHAPTER XVI

SOME RECOLLECTIONS

THE War Diary is but an official record of events, and when one recalls the conditions under which the sequence of these was so often maintained, it is not surprising that the more intimate happenings in the life of a Battalion are not required to be included. But to those who saw it through there remain many memories of the war : things seen, known, heard of; some of which perhaps matter more, some less, than those recorded by the War Diary.

There was something to be learned during the early days as to method of sending up rations from the quartermaster's stores to the Battalion in the trenches. To begin with they came up more or less in bulk, and whilst quite acceptable to hungry men, there arose the difficulties of distribution and of cooking, for fires were unhealthy in the daytime, the smoke drawing shell-fire, charcoal being non-existent till later in the war. One recalls the first ration of meat which arrived on the night of April 27th, 1915, and was hurriedly buried the following morning, after which experience it came up already cooked and cut into small joints; and then the system was evolved whereby the Company quartermaster-sergeants lived down at the transport lines and were responsible for the drawing of the rations for each of their respective Companies from the quartermaster, dividing these up into quantities sufficient for each platoon according to the strengths, which varied daily. Sand-bags, the same as used for the building of the parapet of a trench, were the most practical material in which to pack and carry the several items of the daily ration. In one corner of a bag would be tied tea, in another sugar, whilst the rest of the bag was filled with bully-beef or Maconachie, bread or biscuits, etc. The tea and sugar invariably became intermingled; that mattered little, but the long hairy strings of jute from which the bags were made were somewhat unpleasant to find when drinking, and the bread often resolved itself into crumbs. In the first few weeks there was no milk ration, and consequently there was much scouring of the immediate back areas in search of tins of condensed milk. There was a surprising number

of small shops, which grew almost daily, in the wayside cottages, where tinned fruits, meats and milk were available. Whence these came was a mystery, but the Belgian peasant never lost an opportunity of making money and the supply, like the widow's cruse of oil, never failed. They were a Godsend in the days prior to the establishing of British Expeditionary Force and Y.M.C.A. canteens in the forward areas. There was constant agitation for the addition of milk to the scale of rations, offers being even made to give up a proportion of the cheese and bully-beef rations, the cheese being particularly unpopular, and eventually milk was added in the ratio of one tin per 6 men if sweetened or per 10 men if unsweetened. Later in the war, when owing to the submarine campaign economy became urgent, this ratio was increased to 10 and 15 respectively.

After the rations were all prepared and packed the bags were labelled with the letter of the Company and the number of the platoon and loaded into the Company limber wagon. Usually, just as dark was setting in, the transport began its nightly journey to the Battalion dump, situated as near to the trenches as was practicable, whence they were taken by a carrying party, usually from the Company in reserve, and delivered to the respective Company's Headquarters under the supervision of the Company quartermaster-sergeants who, as soon as this duty was completed, obtained the "strengths" for the next day's supply and returned with the empty wagons to the transport lines.

These first months in 1915 proved a stern test for the transport personnel under Captain Lewis Ramsay and his henchman, Sergeant Robson. Indeed, at no later period were they more severely tried, even when war hardened. Each night, through or around Ypres during its worst days, they passed up and down on their way through the narrow streets, lit by the flames of burning houses, a gallop across the Grande Place, and out through the Menin Gate; and when the Battalion held the line by Hooge, past the dreaded "Hell-Fire Corner." The roads, so silent and deserted by day, were packed with guns, transport of every description, and parties of infantry passing up and down from the trenches during a relief; half *pavé*, half swamp, they were bad enough near to the camps, but as they approached the trenches all semblance of a road disappeared, and its place was taken by shell-holes, which multiplied daily, in and out of which the horses stumbled and the wagons lurched. Then, too, there were times when some part of the way was shelled, necessitating a long wait or a detour, or if the shelling was light, the timing of each shell and the hurried gallop through of a limber at a time. The journey to and from the trench area usually occupied many hours, in the Salient at all events, for there were always frequent delays and the best pace most of the way

was a walk-march; for instance, leaving Dickebusch at about four in the afternoon it was invariably somewhere near two in the morning before the transport lines were again reached, but no matter how congested the roads, or how bad their condition, as dawn broke again all sign of life had vanished from them save, maybe, some few belated men, the last to be relieved, or so footsore and weary that they had fallen behind their platoon, still struggling back to camp. In 1916 the carrying of rations, water or S.A.A. on pack animals was adopted. These could traverse the broken ground easily and approach more closely to the trenches. Special equipment was devised for the various loads.

When towards the end of 1915 Captain Ramsay was appointed Brigade Transport Officer, Lieutenant N. Clark succeeded him; later Sergeant R. Fairlamb followed Sergeant Robson as Transport Sergeant and carried on the good work. Surely no other Battalion was ever better served by its transport. Those who in 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres, travelled the way up from Elverdinghe through Boesinghe, over the Yser Canal, by Pilckem, Iron Cross-roads, across the barraged Brombeek Valley, and through Langmarcke, will bear witness to the gallantry of the transport which passed nightly up and down this ghastly route, always shelled and always bombed or machine-gunned by the enemy aircraft. Many of the animals were so badly blistered by the mustard gas, with which the ground and pools of slime were impregnated, that they were unfit for work for days afterwards, a few having even to be destroyed. Nor was there any rest in the transport lines, for these were subject to attack day and night from the air. In the December of 1917, whilst Captain F. M. Weeks was carrying out the duties of Staff Captain to the Brigade, he one evening rang up the Advanced Headquarters, secure if cramped in their pill-box on the slopes below Passchendaele, complaining that the German aeroplanes were literally "taxi-ing" up and down the road past his ramshackle shelter in Potijze, and as one listened the bursting bombs could actually be heard over the telephone.

Somewhere it is written of a Flanders road :

" A long grey ribbon silvered by a sun
So cold it seems the moon come before day is done.
The tall dark trees, like edges of the night
Closing o'er all save this one gleam of light."

This, of course, must refer to some road a distance behind the line, and in any case was hardly the point of view taken by the majority of those who tramped any of these. "How far now, Quarter?" was the often repeated cry from weary, muddied men on their way down from the trenches after a relief, and "Only another

kilo," was the invariable reply. They were very long those kilos, and the uneven *pavé* made bad going for tired men with iron-shod boots and top-heavy with equipment. This *pavé*, however, alone made going possible in the winter months, for where it was not was a morass of foul slime, some feet deep, or else so rutted as to render marching out of the question and only of use to step on to or into in order to allow of the passage of others. The worst stretch that comes to one's mind, other than the destroyed tracks in the trench areas, was that leading up from Dickebusch to Ypres: a narrow lane, traversed only in the dusk or dark other than by an odd man or two, for it ran parallel to the line at no great distance from it, and was much of the way under observation. Perhaps the best known feature of this road after leaving Dickebusch was the "Café Belge," an estaminet by some cross-roads. Here each night a dim light showed through the chinks of its shuttered windows, and there were always sounds of voices; one wondered, but never had the opportunity to discover, if there were still French wines or beer to be had inside, for at night there could be no halting there and by day the curiosity of the passer-by was not aroused, for it was not a place where one cared to linger.

Other roads recalled are those endless "Routes Nationale" which France owes to Napoleon, on which, for they ran so straight and unrelieved for miles, a Battalion seemed always as though it were but marking time till some rare corner or cottage was reached, and being passed, served to mark progress. The trees which lined each side cast a grateful shade in the warm days. These were for the most part plane trees, but in Picardy they gave place to fruit trees, the property of the Commune through which the roads ran. The Germans, in their tactical retreat of March, 1917, cut down all the trees along the main roads and most of the by-ways, leaving them as they fell as obstacles to pursuit; and how their shade was missed that day of June, 1917, one of the hottest days of all the years of the war, when the Battalion marched up from Souastre to relieve the 18th Division in the line in front of Arras. Some notes by the Rev. C. Lomax, C.F., on the effect upon birds of this destruction of trees are of interest. He says: "The destruction of trees and houses, whether by shell-fire or deliberately before retirement, has put many of the birds in a very awkward predicament. If they build in the ruins, the rats climb the broken walls up to the nests. In consequence, in villages where every house and tree is destroyed and only the wayside crucifix left standing, you find as many nests as possible packed in between the figure of the Christ and the Cross. But if the swallows try to build there, the sparrows steal their nests, so the former are forced to change their habits. It is no use trusting sparrows or rats, so they trust men, and become wonderfully tame. Numberless dug-

outs with an entrance just about five or six feet high have nests plastered to the beams overhead. The swallows fly in and out quite fearlessly. Any man could put his hand into the nest, but I have never come across a single instance of the abuse of the swallows' trust; in fact, in one case a big marquee was left standing in order that a swallow whose nest was on the pole inside might finish rearing her brood."

And who that took part in the retreat of the Fifth Army in March, 1918, when they see the almond blossom in an English spring, will fail to recall the trees in bloom on the roads leading back from St. Quentin, the beauty of which only seemed to accentuate the miseries of that retreat.

Roads recall marching and the band of the Battalion. Only those who tramped the many, many weary miles up and down the front and to and from "Rests" before bands were authorized in the British Expeditionary Force can fully realize what a band on the march, or in billets, meant to their spirits. It has been said that the war produced no good marching songs; that may be, but surely no songs could ever have helped along a weary Battalion more than "Tipperary," "Good-bye-ee," or "Blaydon Races"; the latter, however, was not a product of the war. Of it is related that a South-country officer commanding a North-country Battalion, and to whom the Northern dialect was strange, for long imagined that "Blaydon" was "Bleedin'."

The 151st Infantry Brigade, including as it did a Battalion of the Border Regiment, also numbered "John Peel" in its repertoire, but the good old tuneful melody did not quite lend itself to the quick step of light infantry. This was particularly noticeable on the occasion of a ceremonial parade when, during a "March Past," as the 5th Battalion the Border Regiment, after passing the saluting base, reached the end of the parade ground, the band of a Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry broke into the "Light Barque" and the Companies in line swung forward as one man to its quick beat full of vigour and eagerness, in striking contrast to the somewhat sluggish movement of the Border Battalion.

There were both good and bad marching songs, and these were illustrated at Tatinghem in January, 1918, during a rest when the "Demonstration platoons" of the Battalion from the Corps School marched past the Corps Commander, General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, each to a different song. "Good-bye-ee" fell to the lot of the 8th Battalion platoon under Lieutenant M. A. Smith, and this was selected as the best of all those popular at the time.

The bandsmen, by the way, were not musicians only, for in accordance with regulations each was a trained specialist in some form

of fighting, or was supposed to be. The grateful thanks of all are due to Band-Sergeant Windwill and his men. At Vert-la-Gravelle, in the June of 1918, the few who survived the attack of May 27th on the Aisne Heights sorely missed the consolation of music when, in deference to the French, so serious was the situation, bands for a time were forbidden to play. Yet, even so, there could be heard in passing some billet the notes of a favourite melody, played softly by some bandsman unable to resist the lure of his instrument. As one thinks of those days amongst others, there come memories of the march out from billets in the early dawn, and of the weird effect produced by a band in the tomb-like caves of Arras, and of many church parades. And that brings one to the Padres.

During the first weeks which followed the arrival of the Battalion in Flanders but little was seen of the Padres, for it was so constantly involved in the fighting that only the few days' rest near to Watou in the May of 1915 afforded any opportunity for a Divine Service, and indeed Sundays seemed to belong to the past, and day succeeded day without distinction as to day of week. Duties at the field ambulances, however, fully occupied the Chaplains at this time.

In the British Expeditionary Force Territorial Battalions did not each possess a Chaplain, such as had normally been the case in peace time, but these were posted to Brigades on an eventual establishment of two Church of England, one Roman Catholic and one United Board, the latter covering Wesleyan and Methodist denominations. Sometimes these were brigaded and lived together in billets, but at times the Church of England Chaplains were attached to Battalions for rations and accommodation such as Reverend C. Lomax, T.D., to the 8th Battalion and Captain C. Milner to the 5th Battalion the Border Regiment, each being responsible for two of the Battalions in the Brigade.

In 1915 Reverend Shaddick, a pre-war Chaplain of the 6th Battalion, was the Church of England Chaplain to the Brigade, there being at this time only one, and he was followed by Reverend Astbury at a period when the more settled conditions of Trench Warfare prevailed, and it was possible to hold Parade Services with a certain amount of regularity and to get into closer touch with individuals.

The Padres, however, who left more than merely a memory with the Battalions and whose names will be the most familiar are the Reverend C. Lomax, T.D., Reverend C. Milner and "Father" Evans, the Roman Catholic Chaplain.

The Parade Services were, of course, held in the open as at home, but Communion Service was held sometimes in a barn, sometimes in a room of the Padre's billet or in the Brigade office.

The Reverend C. Lomax joined the Brigade for a twelve months'

tour of duty at Dranoutre in July, 1916, whilst the Division was holding the Kemmel sector. What memories of old-time camps his well-known voice at his first service brought back. One of his early Communion Services was held under cover of a hedge in a field on the slopes of Kemmel Hill. Just over the hedge was a battery of howitzers which had been quite overlooked when the service began and soon afterwards these came into action with startling suddenness. Outside his duties as a chaplain he "ran" for a time the Brigade canteen. In his leisure moments he could usually be found adding, not the accounts of the canteen, but to what must be now a very treasured possession, his water-colour sketches of the many interesting scenes of the war. During a rest from the fighting in the Battle of the Somme in 1916, in his capacity as chaplain the Reverend Lomax went up into the line with a small party to erect a white memorial cross to those of the Battalion who had fallen near High Wood. After it had been placed in position and a few prayers said the party left, but he then sat down to make a sketch of the cross for a memorial card. The Bosch, in full view of whom the position lay, became most attentive. "I finished as quickly as possible," said he, "being hardly capable of drawing straight lines, and dropped into an Observation Post near by, saying to those occupying it that I had the wind up. They had noticed the intense shelling of the sector and asked me where I had been and what I had been doing, so I showed them the sketch, whereupon they roared with laughter, saying, 'Do you know what has happened? Fritz thinks you have put up a new registering mark for artillery and has been trying to knock it down.'"

Reverend C. Milner, another artist by the way, as well as a well-known North-country Rugby Three-quarter, came to the Brigade a little later in the war and saw it through. None who knew him will ever forget his unfailing cheery smile.

But of "Father" Evans and his mare Polly, perhaps the clearest memory will remain after all these years, for he served with the Brigade from start to finish. Full of a quiet humour he loved to wander amongst the men, asking with an air of simplicity questions which caused much amusement. One never was sure whether he was serious or not. For "Polly" he had a great affection, and rare was the occasion when anyone other than himself was allowed to make use of her. Of his serious side a story is recalled of when, whilst the Brigade was in the Vierstraat sector in 1916, he was one day proceeding to the front line and was stopped by a sentry in the communication trench with the remark "You cannot go up there, father, they are shelling." "My men are there," he replied, and went on his way. He well earned the Distinguished Service Order, awarded him in 1917.

These few recollections of the Padres give very little idea of their work for which, to the eye at all events, there could be but little to show, but speaking for those to whom they ministered this can be said, that they brought much comfort and hope to those worn by the strain of war.

CHAPTER XVII

PRISONERS OF WAR

SO far there has been written only of the life of the Battalion in and out of the trenches and of its part in the great battles of the war: now follows the tale of some of those to whom, as the chance of war, fell the unhappy lot to become prisoners in the hands of the Germans.

It is only possible to record here the experiences of a few, and these have been chosen as perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the most general. With one exception the accounts are those of the prisoners taken in the Battalion's first action on the Grafenstafel Ridge in the Second Battle of Ypres in April, 1915, for these cover a longer period, and as it happens are the more easily available now, than the stories of others taken later on in the war, many of whom came to the Battalion from different parts of the United Kingdom and, in consequence, after all these years, cannot be got in touch with.

The treatment of the prisoners varied in accordance with the fluctuations of the war, and when, to the German mind at all events, it seemed likely that the issue would be in favour of Germany, the prisoners suffered accordingly and vice versa when things were going badly for the Hun.

For the infraction, imaginary, wilful or otherwise, of the rules of the prison camps, for attempts to escape and other acts which in the eyes of the Commandants were misdemeanours, the favourite punishments appear to have been solitary confinement and the withholding of the parcels of food sent with such love, and often through much self-denial, from home.

For prisoners from the Battalions of The Durham Light Infantry the collecting and forwarding of these parcels was in the care of Mrs. C. D. Shafto of Durham and her helpers, through whose unceasing labours these came even to those alone in the world without kith or kin—and they were not a few. The good work went further still, those of other regiments in this back-water of the war, when their



Back Row (left to right), Cpl. H. Kelley, L. Sgt. R. Kennedy, L. Sgt. C. Oliver, Sgt. T. Matson, L. Cpl. J. Dawson, L. Cpl. G. Atkinson, Sgt. T. Walker, Sgt. H. Knott, Sgt. J. E. Jones, L. Cpl. J. Powell, L. Cpl. J. Cowie, L. Cpl. E. Moyle, 6th Durhams, Sgt. F. Calder, 2nd Durhams, L. Cpl. J. Kelly, 9th D.L.I., Sgt. C. Oliver, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. W. Dodd, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. E. Creber, 2nd D.L.I., Pte. W. Forman, 2nd D.L.I., L. Cpl. J. Blanchard, Cpl. E. Wood, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. R. Barnes, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. T. Marshall, 8th D.L.I., Pte. P. Farthing, E. Yorks.



Back Row (left to right), Pte. J. Hodgson, 18th Royal Irish, Cpl. J. Powell, 2nd D.L.I., Pte. J. Wyatt, 2nd Durhams, L. Cpl. J. Dawson, 2nd D.L.I., L. Cpl. J. Cowie, 2nd D.L.I., Cpl. E. Moyle, 6th Durhams, Sgt. F. Calder, 2nd Durhams, Sgt. R. Kennedy, 8th D.L.I., Cpl. Kelly, 9th D.L.I., Sgt. C. Oliver, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. W. Dodd, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. E. Creber, 2nd D.L.I., Pte. W. Forman, 2nd D.L.I., L. Cpl. J. Blanchard, Cpl. E. Wood, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. R. Barnes, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. T. Marshall, 8th D.L.I., Pte. P. Farthing, E. Yorks.

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It is not possible to record here the experiences of a few, and these have been chosen as perhaps the most interesting and at the same time the most general. With one exception the accounts are of prisoners taken in the Battalion's first action on the Menin Road Ridge in the Second Battle of Ypres in April, 1915, for a longer period, and as it happens are the more easily known, than the stories of others taken later on in the war, of whom came to the Battalion from different parts of the Kingdom and, in consequence, after all these years, cannot be so easily brought to mind.

The treatment of the prisoners varied in accordance with the progress of the war, and when, to the German mind at all events, it was generally felt that the issue would be in favour of Germany, the prisoners were treated accordingly and vice versa when things were going the other way.

At first, whether imaginary, wilful or otherwise, of the rules of the game, or attempts to escape and other acts which in the eyes of the captors were misdemeanours, the favourite punishment was solitary confinement and the withholding of food. But as the war progressed, and the prisoners were sent with such love, and often through much kindness, to the hospitals, the treatment became more humane.

The care of the Battalions of The Durham Light Infantry during the war was in the hands of Mrs. J. H. Durham and her helpers, through whose unceasing efforts the prisoners were sent to those alone in the world without kith or kin, and a few. The good work went further still, for the prisoners in this back-water of the war, when their

PRISONERS OF WAR INTERED AT THE HAGUE, HOLLAND.



Back Row (left to right). Cpl. H. Kelley, Cpl. A. Foster, Pte. R. McLean, Pte. J. Marshall, Cpl. J. Powell, L/Cpl. J. Cowie, L/Sgt. R. Kennedy, L/Sgt. C. Oliver, Sgt. P. Bramwell, L/Sgt. F. McQuillan, Pte. D. Turnock, Cpl. D. Barr, Pte. J. Russell.
Third Row (left to right). Sgt. T. Marshall, Cpl. C. Friend, Cpl. W. G. Thompson, Pte. C. Forman, Cpl. F. G. Rowlands, L/Cpl. J. Dawson, L/Cpl. G. Armstrong, Cpl. H. Davies, Cpl. J. Wilson, Cpl. E. Moyle, Pte. W. Wyatt, Pte. F. Murphey, Sgt. T. Walker, Sgt. H. Knott, Sgt. J. Richardson, Sgt. R. Greaves.
Second Row (left to right). Cpl. R. Atkinson, Sgt. E. W. Radford, Sgt. J. W. Bilton, C.Q.M.S. F. Wilson, Lieut. Crossland, Capt. Blackett, Capt. Coulson, Capt. Wood, Lieut. Nesbitt, Sgt. J. Creber, Sgt. E. W. Barrer, L/Sgt. W. Berrey, L/Sgt. Colman.
Front Row (left to right). Sgt. J. Blankhead, Cpl. G. Madden, Sgt. F. Calder, Cpl. J. Blanchard, Cpl. E. Wood, L/Cpl. W. Toole, L/Cpl. J. Lynas, Sgt. W. Dodd.



Back Row (left to right). Pte. J. Hodgson, 18th Royal Irish, Cpl. J. Powell, 2nd D.L.I. — Pte. J. Wyatt, 2nd Durhams, — L/Cpl. J. Dawson, 2nd D.L.I., L/Cpl. J. Cowie, 2nd D.L.I., Cpl. E. Moyle, 6th Durhams, Sgt. F. Calder, 2nd Durhams,
Third Row (left to right). — Sgt. R. Kennedy, 8th D.L.I., Cpl. Kelly, 9th D.L.I., — Sgt. C. Oliver, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. W. Dodd, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. E. Creber, 2nd D.L.I., Pte. W. Forman, 2nd D.L.I., —
Second Row (left to right). — — — — — Capt. The Rev. Hill-Williams (C.F.), Lieut. Rogerson, Mrs. Rogerson, Capt. Wood, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. R. Barnes, 8th D.L.I., Sgt. T. Marshall, 8th D.L.I., Pte. P. Farthing, E. Yorks.
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need was great, sharing in the good fortune of their comrades, for "Comradeship," says Captain Rogers, "was the key-note"; and "My comrades saw to it that I was not without food that day," wrote Private W. Arnott.

At least three of the Battalion succeeded in escaping; Lance-Corporal Thomas and Private H. Tustin, both of A Company, and Private Leggett of B Company, who were captured during the evening of April 25th, 1915, though others made unsuccessful attempts.

Lieutenant J. A. Stenhouse, Royal Army Medical Corps, the Battalion Medical Officer, was wounded and made prisoner on the morning of April 26th, 1915, a few weeks later was sent back to England and later on in the same year rejoined the Battalion at Armentières.

On his arrival at Boetleer's Farm on April 25th, 1915, Lieutenant Stenhouse found that the buildings which had been used by the Canadians as a Headquarters were full of their wounded who had crawled in and were in great need of attention, their own medical officer having been killed. The buildings were quite unsuitable for a dressing-station, being constantly shelled, partly destroyed, and also under the fire of a sniper. About dawn on Monday, April 26th, the Germans surrounded the farm, firing as they closed in on the buildings.

Though he and his orderly, Lance-Corporal Fish, alone were standing, and both wore Red Cross armlets, the Germans continued firing, whereupon, holding up his arms, Lieutenant Stenhouse endeavoured to explain that he was a doctor and that there were only wounded in the buildings. The Germans then fired at him at close range and he fell wounded. Lance-Corporal Fish, who came forward to lift him, was also fired on and severely wounded in the head. At the same time others of the Germans were moving amongst the wounded, striking them with their rifles, and the cries of the men showed they were being roughly handled.

Lieutenant Stenhouse's own words convey to one's mind very vividly the scenes through which he passed when taken through the German lines; he says:

"I was led away through the advancing Germans who appeared to be in great force. With the exception of some who were dressed as sailors, they all wore the field grey uniform and most had the small round service cap; none wore khaki. There were a great many dead lying about and numbers were falling under the fire of the Battalion and shrapnel.

"The German trenches contained many dead, and from their

particularly foul odour they must have been lying there for a day or two. Beyond these trenches was a large pile of British equipment which I was told had been taken from some Highlanders (Canadian?).

"My guard were Saxons and were not offensive, but after marching for about twenty minutes other Germans came up and accused me of having had a machine-gun in the buildings and of using it against them. Naturally I denied this, but they persisted and threatened to shoot me, and as they were very furious and threatening this appeared very probable.

"Whilst awaiting developments I lighted a cigarette, and though my guard permitted this the others objected and one struck it from my mouth. Other Germans afterwards came up who, in addition to again accusing me of having had a machine-gun, stated that I had been using Dumdum bullets and as evidence of this produced a Mauser bullet which they handed to me. This had about a quarter of an inch cut off the nose. When I pointed out to them the fact that it was a Mauser bullet they handed me a clip of British cartridges which were grooved about a quarter of an inch from the nose and taking up a Lee-Enfield rifle from the ground inserted the nose of a bullet in the thumb-piece of the cut-off to illustrate how the Dumdum bullets were made and what the hole in the thumb-piece was for, and accused me of having spent my time cutting the grooves in the bullets. They did not, however, break off the nose of the bullet.

"In spite of opposition my guard marched me off. I asked to be taken to a doctor to have my head wound dressed, but they stated that there was no doctor near but that there would be one in the village we were approaching. On arrival in the village I was taken to what apparently was a police station and here I was searched, everything of value being taken from me, even my greatcoat and equipment. A doctor here, however, dressed my wound and returned to me the things taken from me. I asked him for a cigarette which he gave me and promised to bring me a cup of coffee which he presumably then went to get. After his departure, however, the guard entered and ordered me outside into the street where two German officers came up and removed my collar badges by means of wire-cutters, and my guard then marched me on again. All along the road were Germans who called out 'Schweinhund Englander' and 'Gott strafe England' and spat in my face, saying, 'Schwein'; some even attacked me, striking my legs and back with long sticks until my guard drove them off.

"On reaching a small village I was shut up in a hall, where I slept for some time until wakened by two German officers who asked me questions which I refused to answer. I asked for water, but this was refused, though one of the officers offered me a cigar which I

declined, having been without food for so long a time. From this village I was then moved to Roulers where I was locked up until the 29th April. Whilst here I was sent for by a German officer and questioned particularly about the losses of the Battalion. This German officer admitted that their losses had been enormous, but said that their artillery-fire must have been found very terrible by the Battalion which, for Territorials, had fought very well. Another German officer who looked in and found I was a doctor said I was taken in error, but that there was some suspicion that I had had a machine-gun where the wounded were, and in any case, having been through their lines, could not now be sent back, but that they did not keep doctors long and I would soon be returned.

"The food at this time consisted of black bread and once a day some soup.

"About midday on the 29th April I was put in a railway carriage with some Turcos who had been badly gassed, and just before the train started two Canadian officers were crushed in, a German officer remarking that he was sure they would like to travel with their dark friends. The day was very hot but the guard, who had bayonets like saws, kept the windows and ventilators shut and the blinds drawn. During the journey nothing but water was supplied, and that only rarely, although there were so-called Red Cross people on the platforms of the stations the train halted at.

"Cologne was reached on the evening of May 1st, and here I was removed from my carriage and placed in a train going to Mainz. The Citadelle was reached about midnight. On the following day the first proper meal since my capture was served and I was then, together with other prisoners, locked up for four days during which we were given hot baths, a change of underclothing, and our other clothing was sterilized. The food was fair here, but not nearly sufficient, and the other officers there depended upon what they received from home. There were about fifty English prisoners, the remainder being French, Russians and Belgians. These four nationalities were always put together in the same room, the officials explained, so that they could not complain that their treatment was any different from others."

Lance-Corporal Thomas, together with six other men of the Battalion, each of whom was wounded, were captured in their trench in front of Boetleer's Farm, the order to retire having apparently not reached them. All money and practically all their possessions were taken from them. Compelled to carry those of the wounded who could not walk, both their own and German, they were marched to a neighbouring village where they spent the night in a church. Here

one piece of bread and a cup of coffee without sugar or milk was given to each. The following day they were marched, a party of eighty, from various units, to Roulers, where they were detained for two days during which time the only food provided was one piece of bread and a cup of black coffee morning and night; they were only allowed three minutes daily for exercise. On the night of April 28th they were sent in closed trucks to Münster; the heat was intense and the doors of the trucks were only opened whilst the train was standing in stations in order to give the civilians an opportunity of jeering at the prisoners. The same allowance of bread and coffee was given as before. After a journey of thirty-six hours the prisoners were taken from the train and marched to a camp at Rennbahn and put into large rooms, each accommodating about two hundred. Every prisoner was given a mattress and two blankets. The food here consisted of very thin vegetable soup served at noon and 7 p.m., with a small piece of meat or sausage at the latter hour; the meat or sausage was so small that half a mess of ten would share it one day and the other half the next. Later on this meat ration was only served twice a week.

For six weeks Lance-Corporal Thomas remained in the camp at Rennbahn, which was a big headquarters from which daily working-parties of fifty or sixty men were sent to various places; at the end of this time he was one of a party of two hundred prisoners sent to work at the coke ovens at Dortmund. The daily shift was of twelve hours, Sunday included, but every alternate Sunday the working-day was twenty-four hours. The whole party refused to do work which they said would be assisting the enemy. Under a threat to stop all parcels from home and send the party to work in the marshes in Hanover the prisoners gave way with the exception of some fifty, of whom Lance-Corporal Thomas was one, together with six other English prisoners. These seven were then sent back to Rennbahn where they were court-martialled with a view to fixing the blame upon a Corporal Wilson. As, however, his comrades would not testify to that effect, without any further proceedings the Authorities sent Corporal Wilson to Münster, where he was kept in solitary confinement, and the remainder were sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment.

Whilst at Rennbahn Lance-Corporal Thomas, with other prisoners, succeeded in tunnelling under their quarters sufficiently far to be able to make an attempt to escape, but just twenty-four hours before their plans were completed they were moved to Moers, the station for Ruhrort. There were twelve English prisoners in the party and they were ordered to work in the coal mines; all the English and many of the French refused. Those who refused were not permitted to return to the ordinary quarters which were comfortable, warm and lighted, but were turned out into the barrack yard in pouring rain

and kept there from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m., their overcoats being taken from them, and if they moved hand or foot they were maltreated. At night they were put into a cold, bare room to sleep on a concrete floor, and the only food given them consisted of half a slice of bread and half a bowl of vegetable soup. This continued for four days, at the end of which from sheer exhaustion they were compelled to give in. They were then allowed to return to their original quarters where they were able to wash and sleep and get food from the parcels brought with them from Rennbahn. No further parcels were received for a month after this, the food supplied was worse than ever and their work in the mines carried on upon a starvation diet. Prisoners were permitted to see a doctor but he never allowed an English prisoner to have a day's rest. Two very sick English prisoners were turned out of their beds by a guard of eight Germans and kept standing at attention in the yard.

On April 26th, 1916, Lance-Corporal Thomas, with other prisoners, cut away the wood skirting the walls of their quarters and dislodged a sufficient number of bricks to enable them to get through. The same night he, with four Frenchmen, made his escape. Each had some chocolate and biscuits and Thomas a compass which had been sent to him in a parcel. They were thirty miles from the Dutch Frontier and travelled by night from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., hiding in woods by day. During their first day they saw no one and but few passed their hiding-place on the second day, probably on account of very heavy rain. After three nights' travelling they crossed the Frontier into Holland at Venlo, where they were very hospitably treated and sent on to the British Consul at Rotterdam.

Private H. Tustin, after his capture during the retirement of A Company on the night of April 25th, 1915, was marched back through the German trenches and ultimately arrived, one of a party of about two hundred, at Roulers at 1 a.m. on April 26th. In the morning, after a meal of a small quantity of war-bread and a bowl of coffee, the prisoners were taken in street cars to Courtrai where they were lodged in the gaol until the 28th: they were then hurriedly removed at 6.30 p.m. to the railway station and entrained in covered cattle-trucks. The journey that followed lasted for two days and three nights. On May 1st they left the train and marched through Münster to Rennbahn camp. During this time they were given two hundred grammes of war-bread and coffee once daily, but on the evening of April 30th they were allowed as much soup as they wanted. All suffered much from hunger. During the journey a number of French prisoners, apparently Zouaves, were added to the party; some of these had been badly gassed and they were more exhausted even than the English but were goaded on with bayonets and threatened with

revolvers. Occasionally one of them would fall and he was then kicked till he rose. No allowance was made for wounded men, one of whom Private Tustin carried on his back for a considerable distance.

On arrival at the camp on May 1st the prisoners were given a bath and their clothing fumigated.

The daily routine of the camp was as follows: Between 5 and 6 a.m. a ration of bread and coffee was issued. From 6 to 8 a.m. prisoners were employed on fatigues, chopping wood, grooming horses, etc. From 8 to 10 a.m. they were kept at severe exercise on the parade ground; this was so strenuous that occasionally a prisoner fainted. Afterwards they rested till noon, when they were given a bowl of watery soup and then had leisure till 3 p.m. Another hour of exercise then followed similar to the morning. At 7 p.m. there was issued thin soup and prisoners were in bed and lights out by 10 p.m.

There were altogether about six thousand prisoners in Rennbahn; the majority were French, the remainder English and Russian. In each room some two hundred were accommodated and they were very crowded. Arrangements for comfort were deficient in many respects: two totally inadequate stoves, burning coke, were supposed to warm the room, a sack full of dirty, dusty straw and two thin blankets furnished each man's bedding. The sanitary arrangements were fair and the water supply good, but the arrangements for ablutions were insufficient.

Private Tustin remained at Rennbahn until September 5th, 1916, some sixteen months, when he and Private Burk, a Canadian, made their escape. Just outside the main camp was a hospital enclosure fenced with barbed wire, brilliantly lighted at night and patrolled by armed guards; this was the only part of the camp not surrounded by electrified wire. By persuading one of the guards that they had friends in the hospital whom they must see, they managed to obtain admittance and there concealed themselves until it was dark. Whilst the guard was being changed they scaled the wire fence and were free. It was 9 p.m. when they left the camp, and after hiding in a hedge till 10 o'clock they set out in a north-westerly direction guided by a compass and maps procured from a French prisoner. Their food consisted of biscuits and chocolate. Travelling by night and hiding by day for nine days, they reached the Dutch Frontier on the morning of September 14th, and though fired at by a patrol succeeded in crossing into Holland and were met by two Dutch policemen. The Police Authorities treated them with the utmost kindness, giving them food and a bath. Subsequently they were sent under escort to Rotterdam where they arrived on the evening of the 14th. Here the British Consul supplied clothing and money, and as the port of Rotterdam

was closed for forty-eight hours they were lodged in the Seamen's Mission. On the 18th Private Tustin arrived in the Tyne.

Amongst the wounded in and around Boetleer's Farm who were made prisoners when the farm was captured on the morning of April 26th was Major J. R. Ritson who, it will be remembered, had refused to be carried away after he had been wounded on the evening of the 25th as there were no stretcher-bearers available. He had been again wounded during the night by a shell which burst on top of the dug-out in which he was lying, after which he apparently became unconscious but was roused at daylight by being shouted at by a German non-commissioned officer who, after searching him, brought in an officer. The latter obtained a doctor who temporarily dressed his wounds, after which he was taken on a stretcher to a dressing-station in a village street (Passchendaele?) where his wounds were redressed and he was then sent in a car to the railway station in Roulers. Here he was first placed in a cattle-truck but afterwards transferred to an improvised hospital train, where he shared a compartment with Captain E. A. Leybourne, wounded in the leg, and a French officer who had had his knee-cap shot away. After one change of trains Paddeborn station was reached where all were removed from the train, but, as all the road ambulances here were found to be full, he, together with a wounded Canadian officer, was put back into the train which went on, arriving after dark at Hoffgeismar, and he was taken to a small private house used as a hospital where was another Canadian officer who, however, died during the night, and several men.

After eight weeks in this hospital Major Ritson was moved to Hann Munden Prison Camp, an old oil factory. Here he was the only British officer amongst three hundred French and six hundred Russian officers. There had been up to a few days previously forty British officers at Hann Munden, but they had all been transferred to another camp. Others, however, came in, till eventually the number rose to forty again.

Early in May, 1917, Major Ritson was moved to Clausthal where there were only British officers, and remained here until the November when he was again moved, this time to Holtzminden where were Captain J. L. Wood, Captain J. N. O. Rogers, and Lieutenants A. W. Nesbitt and J. O. Wilson, these being the first of the 8th Battalion he had seen since April 26th, 1915. Captain W. H. Coulson arrived at Holtzminden in the December of 1917.

Lieutenant J. N. O. Rogers, of D Company, who, wounded during the morning of April 25th, 1915, lay all day in his trench, was taken by the Germans in the evening. His story, he says, "could not be told in less than a book"—this is true of all, but in this chronicle only the scantiest outlines are possible. Here is his tale:

"I was lying on my face, feeling more dead than alive, when the Huns came along my platoon trench to me. The sun was setting, and I had only recovered consciousness a few minutes before, just, indeed, when the few survivors of D Company were leaving the trench. The Huns, perhaps angry at their losses, gave me, and other wounded in my trench, a bullet as their first salute, but mine was not in a vital part. Later ambulance men removed my equipment, and later again removed me to their original trenches, where that night and part of the next day was spent on a diet of morphine and coffee. In the afternoon I was taken and laid with probably a hundred other stretcher-cases in a field beside a farm-house, not far behind the German trenches. Towards evening I was moved again and finally arrived in the middle of the night at Roulers, where I was put into hospital. Vague memories only remain of a receiving ward, where all nationalities lay on the floor cheek by jowl, and of the delirium of my companion in a small room to which I was later moved. Next morning my clothes were cut away, and my wounds dressed. The nurses here were Belgian and charity's self; but their German sisters in another hospital in Roulers and again in Ghent were very good; and the German surgeons, too, both behind the line and in Germany, were excellent.

"Eight weeks were passed in hospital in Roulers and Ghent before I went down into Germany to hospital in Minden. Then in September I was sent into camp at Gutersloh. I was lucky in that two officers of our Battalion (Wood and Leybourne) had previously arrived and were nicely settled. To them, with no knowledge that I was not killed, I appeared at first as a ghost or one risen from the grave. To my other compatriots I was a disappointment. The arrival of any new prisoner was the signal for a general descent in search of the latest news from the front; and the fact that I was an April hatching proved a grievous disappointment.

"Gutersloh was a good camp, plenty of games and amusements. Comradeship was the keynote. Nevertheless, as was but natural, constant efforts to escape were being made, for, as one of the prisoners there has said 'the bitter cross of captivity does not lie in any physical hardships . . . the whole sting of his position, that makes it so intolerable, is quite another matter. He is futile. . . . There is no more terrible reflection for a man.'

"Attempts at escape nearly always failed, but the effort and the hope entertained helped many through the years of captivity.

"Gutersloh was a mixed camp of British, French, Belgian and Russian officers; but in the spring of 1917 the British were moved from there to an all-British camp at Creffeld. Our stay was short, our departure dramatically sudden, and in its way more comic than

imagination can well conceive. We now experienced two 'strafe' camps, Strohen and Holtzminde till March, 1918, when we were exchanged to Holland.

"Justice cannot be done to the humours, griefs and interests of the prison camps in any brief article; and those readers with more than a general interest in our life in Germany, and any student of human nature will do well to read F. W. Harvey's 'Comrades in Captivity.' They will see that 'the ways of a man with a maid' are not more wonderful than the relations between the German and the guest within his gate."

Private W. Arnott of A Company, wounded during the afternoon of April 25th, 1915, lay till the early hours of the morning of the 26th when he was picked up by the Germans and taken to a barn where his wound was dressed by a German Red Cross man. On two occasions he was greeted with "English swine" and much by-play with the bayonet. Eventually he was placed on a stretcher and carried away preceded by two men bearing spades. "Buried alive" he confessed were the words continually in his mind. However, their purpose was more humane than that, for they filled in shell-holes to make his progress easier.

Some time later, after reaching a German base, pneumonia set in and he was placed in the "Pegging-out House," as he called it, to die. Recovering somewhat here he was taken into hospital and his leg amputated. His troubles were not yet at an end, for now lock-jaw seized him, and from this he suffered for nearly a month. During this time, he said, he owed his life to a fellow prisoner who attended to him night and day, feeding him by means of a tube.

On the whole he was kindly treated, possibly a German adjutant who took a liking to him being responsible for this, but there was one incident of cruelty. He had a habit of whistling under his breath, and whilst indulging in this one day a doctor came into the room and hearing him, angrily wiped his "ration slate" clean with a towel. But, as he said, he did not worry about it for they lived on one another, and his comrades saw to it that he was not without food that day.

In the August of 1915 he was amongst those British prisoners who were exchanged. There was little care evinced in the arrangements for those leaving the hospital to begin their journey home, for they were laid upon the open platform at the station in pouring rain for some hours before a train was available and then placed in

¹ "Comrades in Captivity"—A Record of Life in Seven German Prison Camps. Published by Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd.

fourth-class compartments, in which they travelled for some three hundred miles.

On arrival in hospital at Wandsworth on August 25th he was in a very filthy condition and with a beard three inches long. Unfortunately he died in a London hospital within a month of his return to England.

On the Aisne on May 27th, 1918, in the third and last German offensive, Captain F. W. Burgoyne-Johnson, who had served almost continuously with the Battalion since May, 1915, was, with others, made prisoner. Three platoons of his Company (A) had earlier in the month been distributed amongst B, C, and D Companies to strengthen them and he, with his remaining platoon, held as a reserve at Battalion Headquarters. During the progress of the fighting on the morning of the 27th he was stationed on the outskirts of the Bois de Beau Marais immediately in front of Chaudardes with orders to collect any stragglers and direct them to that village. When all these had apparently passed through he proceeded to Chaudardes and was ordered to hold a line between the village and the wood watching the left flank. From his position it was seen that the Germans were already in the fields in the rear of both the right and left flanks. Attacked from in front, his utterly exhausted men with but a few rounds of ammunition were unable to withstand the Germans, who rushed the position. After capture they were marched back through the Bois de Beau Marais but to the left of the Battalion's original position, over the Chemin des Dames for some kilometres to a "cage," and later on to a village through which it was reported the Kaiser passed about this time.

Captain Burgoyne-Johnson states that he was amazed at the number of machine-gun groups and troops which passed as they were being marched back, and the lines and lines of transport following which seemed unending.

From the village the next move was to an old peace-time French fort in Hirson, about thirty kilometres distant, where he was kept for several days underground, "only being allowed above ground at certain times, and what a joy it was." On the way to Hirson the French inhabitants (there were French prisoners in the party) gave them water from buckets, but at times the German non-commissioned officer in charge pointed his rifle at the French women and drove them away. His only food this day was a crust of bread.

From Hirson he was sent by train to Rastatt. During this journey the train was pulled up as British aeroplanes were about, having, it was reported, just previously dropped bombs on Saarbrücken. "It did us good to see our machines and it was amusing to see the Germans scuttling to places of safety." Two of the party

did make an attempt to escape at this time, but were recaptured and brought back later. There was a sentry in each compartment who occasionally fell asleep, or pretended to, but to attempt to escape seemed futile without food or plans, with no knowledge of the country, but little knowledge of the language, and all losing strength daily.

In the "cage" at Rastatt there were already other officers who had practically completed a tunnel from under one of their huts to outside the barbed wire, digging this by means of their steel helmets, but it was discovered by a sentry and all thereupon removed to various other prison camps. Captain Burgoyne-Johnson was sent with others a two days' train journey north to the Baltic to the island of Danholm, just off Stralsund on the mainland, and here he remained until after the Armistice. In all there were about a thousand officers in the camp, and amongst these were Captain J. H. Burrell, Captain J. W. E. Turnbull, Captain H. Wilkinson, Lieutenant W. R. Hill, and others of the 8th Battalion. Lieutenant W. R. Hill, M.C., unfortunately died at Danholm from blood-poisoning. In the *Camp Magazine*, *The Outlook*, for November, 1918, is written of him: "He will be greatly missed by the many who knew him and learnt to love and admire him during our sojourn here."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECOND AND THIRD LINE BATTALIONS

IT is felt that this record would be incomplete were there no mention of the 2/8th and 3/8th Battalions, neither of which had the fortune to serve as a Battalion overseas, but carried on the good work of training, and a large percentage of the personnel of both did actually serve ultimately with the first line or other units in one theatre or another of the war.

The 2/8th Battalion was formed in the October of 1914 in Durham City by Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Blackett, who had held command of the first line Battalion until the middle of that month, with Major J. Burgoyne-Johnson, T.D., as Second-in-Command.

The nucleus of the second line consisted of those members of the first line who, either had not taken the foreign service obligation, or were medically unfit for active service overseas.

Its organization and equipment being completed, the Battalion left Durham City on February 1st, 1915, for Seaham Harbour on Coast Defence duty, and remained here till on May 10th it moved into the Leam Camp, near to Felling.

On May 26th Lieutenant-Colonel Blackett was ordered, with all the experienced officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men—unfit for service overseas—to Long Benton, Northumberland, there to form the 3rd Coast Defence Battalion, which was composed from that category of personnel of all the Durham Light Infantry second line Battalions. Subsequently the 3rd Coast Defence Battalion became the 23rd Provisional Battalion, and on June 21st, 1915, moved to Hornsea as part of the garrison of the Humber Defences. Early in 1916 it was transferred to Newcastle, and later on to Clacton-on-Sea.

At Leam Camp there now remained of the second line Battalion, under Captain R. E. B. Lisle, practically only young officers, non-commissioned officers and men of a few weeks' or months' service. In the July Lieutenant-Colonel E. C. Etheridge, D.S.O., took command.

During October and November, 1915, the Battalion occupied billets in Gateshead, and then proceeded to Doncaster where

Divisional training was carried out, the General Officer Commanding the Division being Lieutenant-General Sir Forestier-Walker.

In July, 1916, the Division was broken up, and the Battalion, together with the second lines of the 6th, 7th, and 9th Battalions, was moved to Catterick. Lieutenant-Colonel Etheridge relinquished command just prior to this move, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lowther was posted in his place.

All the second line Battalions remained at Catterick until November, 1916, when those of the 6th, 7th, and 8th Battalions were ordered to Basingstoke in Hampshire, where they continued to be stationed until March, 1917, in which month yet another move was made, this time to Colchester, where a short time afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel J. Jeffries, D.S.O., who had been invalided home from Flanders where he had held command of the 1/6th Battalion, took over from Lieutenant-Colonel Lowther and held command until in July, 1917, the Battalion was disbanded, and its personnel transferred to various other units both overseas and at home in accordance with their medical fitness.

During the two and three-quarter years of its service the following officers held the appointment of Adjutant to the Battalion :

Captain H. J. Mowlam—From its formation to about April, 1915.

Captain A. Mangles—April to July, 1915.

Lieutenant T. A. Brass—July to August, 1915.

Captain R. S. Pratt, M.C.—August, 1915, to May, 1916.

Captain H. Johnson, M.C.—May to July, 1917.

The Quartermaster throughout the whole period from raising to disbandment was Captain J. Hornsby, who afterwards was posted to the 4th Reserve Battalion East Lancashire Regiment and Headquarters of the East Coast Defences, with which he continued to serve until September, 1919.

The 3/8th Battalion was formed in June, 1915, from members of the first line Battalion who had been discharged from hospital after being wounded in the Second Battle of Ypres in April, 1915, and from recruits.

Lieutenant-Colonel J. B. Johnson, T.D., held command with Captain H. S. King as Adjutant, Lieutenant H. J. McBratney as Quartermaster, and Regimental Sergeant-Major J. Moran.

The duties of the Battalion were those of training drafts for the first line.

Till March 31st, 1916, the Battalion was stationed in Durham City, when it was transferred to Gosforth, remaining here till May 23rd, 1916, and then joined the remainder of the third line units at

230 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

Horton in Northumberland, where later on the whole of the third lines of the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Battalions were amalgamated into the 5th Reserve Battalion under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. C. Watson, with Captain P. Challons as Adjutant. The Quartermaster at first was Lieutenant W. McBeath, but he was afterwards replaced by Captain W. Francis, the Quartermaster of the first line, who had been wounded in the April, 1915, and Captain McBeath was posted to the first line joining that Battalion near Arras in 1917. The Regimental Sergeant-Major was Regimental Sergeant-Major B. Benson, and the Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeants—there were two—Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeants E. F. Lee and D. Stirling.

This Battalion removed to Catterick on October 8th, 1916.



COLONEL J. R. RITSON, O.B.E., T.D.
Commanding February, 1920—February, 1927.

250 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

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CHAPTER XIX

AFTER THE WAR. THE NEW BATTALION

EARLY in 1920 the reconstitution of the Territorial Army was begun, the title being altered as above from the old form of "Territorial Force."

The conditions of service varied considerably from those in force prior to the war. A foreign service obligation was compulsory for all joining. Service and proficiency pay became admissible in addition to the ordinary rates of pay as current in the Regular Army, and a bounty annually of £5 for a trained man and £3 for a recruit could be earned under certain conditions in respect of training. The establishment was reduced from 30 officers 980 other ranks to 21 officers, 638 warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and has since been further reduced to 20 officers 636 warrant-officers, non-commissioned officers and men.

In February, 1920, Lieutenant-Colonel J. R. Ritson, T.D., was appointed to command the new Battalion, with Captain E. H. Veitch, M.C., as Adjutant and Lieutenant H. Wilkinson, M.C., as Quartermaster. The Permanent Staff was complete by April, and on May 1st recruiting opened.

A surprising number of those who had served during the war with the Battalion formed the nucleus of the new unit. Though many of these were suffering from disabilities due to wounds or sickness and in receipt of pensions, it was recognized by the War Office that they would bring others in with them and so assist recruiting, they were permitted to re-engage.

A Reunion was held in the Drill Hall at Durham in June, when several hundred of those who had passed through the Battalion during the years of the war met once again.

By July the strength had risen to within a few of four hundred, and almost all went to camp at Scarborough at the end of that month.

In 1921 the formation of the Defence Force in April greatly interfered with the progress of the Battalion, but fortunately that force was disbanded the first week in July, thus making it possible for the Annual Camp to be held, this being again at Scarborough.

282 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

Since 1921 the life of the Battalion has continued smoothly with the exception of the short period of the General Strike in 1926, in which year, however, the high water mark of the authorized establishment was reached. The Annual Camps during these years were held at Catterick in 1922, 1923, and again in 1926, at Ripon in 1924, and Pwllheli in 1925.

In the H.M. The King's Birthday Honours List of 1923, Lieutenant-Colonel J. R. Ritson was awarded the Order of the British Empire.

Each succeeding year one has missed from the Battalion many well-known faces, and the camp of 1926 is marked as being the last under the command of Colonel J. R. Ritson, O.B.E., T.D., for, after thirty-one years' service with the Battalion, including seven as Commanding Officer, early in 1927 he will have handed over to his successor. Once upon a time the late Field-Marshal, the Earl of Ypres (when still Sir John French) said that "Comradeship and unselfishness form the keynote of true military endeavour, and that he believed that this forgetfulness of self and unalloyed striving for the good of the whole was more difficult to practise in the military than in any other profession." Surely it is in the practice of these very qualities that Colonel Ritson has set an example for those who follow him.

APPENDIX I

COMMANDING OFFICERS, 1798-1926

DATE.	NAME.	REMARKS.
1798	Lt.-Col. J. R. Fenwick .	The Armed Association.
1860	Lt.-Col. W. B. Wilkin .	1st Administrative Battalion.
	Lt.-Col. E. E. Perkins .	1st Administrative Battalion.
1871-81	Lt.-Col. Joicey . . .	1st Administrative Battalion, 7th Durham Rifle Volunteer Corps and 4th Durham Rifle Volunteers.
1881-83	Lt.-Col. Monks . . .	4th Durham Rifle Volunteers.
1883-94	Lt.-Col. C. Rowlandson	4th Durham Rifle Volunteers, 4th V. Bn. The Durham Light Infantry.
1894-1902	Lt.-Col. C. Perkins .	4th V. Bn. The Durham Light Infantry.
1902-08	Lt.-Col. J. Humble .	4th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry and 8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry.
1908-12	Lt.-Col. J. Turnbull .	8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry T.F.
1912-14	Lt.-Col. W. C. Blackett	8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry T.F.
*1914-20	Lt.-Col. J. Turnbull . .	1st line 8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry.
1917-18	Lt.-Col. J. H. Martin (Royal Scots) . . .	From May, 1917, when Lt.-Col. Turnbull was seconded for duty elsewhere, the Battalion was commanded by these officers with temporary or acting rank whilst holding the appointment.
1918	Lt.-Col. P. Kirkup. . .	
1920	Lt.-Col. J. R. Ritson .	The reconstituted 8th Bn. The Durham Light Infantry T.A.

* In October, 1914, Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull reassumed command of the Battalion vice Lieutenant-Colonel Blackett to command 2nd Line Battalion. A 3rd Line Battalion was also subsequently raised and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. Burgoyne-Johnson. For the years intervening between 1798-1860 the records are incomplete, but first as Captain and later as Lieutenant-Colonel, W. B. Wilkins held command for no less than twenty-nine years. There is no record of the names of those who commanded the Corps raised prior to 1798.

APPENDIX II

ADJUTANTS, 1860-1926

- 1860 Major Wilkin, 2nd Lanark Militia.
- 1890 Major Curling, The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1890 Captain Randolph, Lancashire Fusiliers.
- 1895 Captain D. P. S. Reid, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.
- 1900 Captain J. H. Mander, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.
- 1906 Captain F. H. Mahony, Cheshire Regiment.
- 1909 Captain A. H. M. Bowers, The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1912 Captain G. A. Stevens, Royal Fusiliers.
- 1916 Captain P. Kirkup, 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1917 Captain J. H. Burrell, 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1918 Lieutenant D. H. Farquharson, 4th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1919 Vacant.
- 1920 Major E. H. Veitch, 8th Battalion The Durham Light Infantry.
- 1923 Captain E. B. Harmer, The Durham Light Infantry.

APPENDIX III

ROLL OF OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE 4TH VOLUNTEER BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY WHO SERVED IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR

1st VOLUNTEER SERVICE COMPANY (23rd February, 1900—31st April, 1901)

Captain John Turnbull.
Lieutenant J. R. Ritson.

Sergt. Cuthbertson, J. W.	Pte. Mallabar, G.	Pte. Pratt, J.
Corpl. Mewes, W.	Pte. Martin, W.	Pte. Pattison, M.
Pte. Atkinson, W.	Pte. Marshall, R. H.	Pte. Rose, W.
Pte. Brown, G.	Pte. Marshall, A. R.	Pte. Rowe, T. H.
Pte. Favell, F. H.	Pte. Maddison, J. W.	Pte. Scarr, W.
Pte. Graham, T.	Pte. Morrow, J.	Pte. Simpson, E.
Pte. Henderson, T.	Pte. Moore, W.	Pte. Walton, T.
Pte. Liddle, W.	Pte. McHatton, E.	Pte. Walton, R.
Pte. Longridge, J.	Pte. Nichols, J.	Pte. Williamson, J.

2nd VOLUNTEER SERVICE COMPANY (15th March, 1901—4th June, 1902)

Captain J. Cook.
Lieutenant J. G. Dixon.

Sergt. Clough, T.	Pte. Eland, I.	Pte. Morland, J.
Corpl. Earley, W.	Pte. Emmerson, T.	Pte. Noble, W.
Bugler Hutchinson, R.	Pte. Errington, W.	Pte. Proctor, D.
Pte. Allen, E.	Pte. Galley, G.	Pte. Robson, J.
Pte. Armstrong, E.	Pte. Hill, J. W.	Pte. Turnbull, M.
Pte. Coates, H.	Pte. Hunter, J. M.	Pte. Willey, N.
Pte. Carr, T.	Pte. Laidlaw, J.	Pte. Warcup, R.
Pte. Dawson, W.	Pte. Hughes, M.	
Pte. Earl, T.	Pte. Mole, H.	

3rd VOLUNTEER SERVICE COMPANY (9th March, 1902—31st July, 1902)

Lce-Sergt. Vasey, H.	Pte. Robson, G.	Pte. Trotter, R.
Corpl. Usworth, T.	Pte. Robinson, W. A.	Pte. Trow, W.
Pte. Burdess, A.	Pte. Roddam, R.	Pte. Wardle, J.
Pte. Norman, R.	Pte. Roper, J.	
Pte. Pigg, W.	Pte. Robson, E.	

APPENDIX IV

ANNUAL CAMPS, 1890-1926

YEAR.	PLACE.	BRIGADIER.
1890	Richmond.	Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allan, V.C.
1891	Morpeth	Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allan, V.C.
1892	Redcar	(Regimental Camp)
1893	Ripon	Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allan, V.C.
1894	Redcar	(Regimental Camp)
1895	(No camp)
1896	Seaton Carew	Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allan, V.C.
1897	Seaton Carew	Lt.-Gen. Sir H. Havelock-Allan, V.C.
1898	Brackenber Moor, Appleby	Colonel Upcher.
1899	Richmond.	Colonel Garstin.
1900	Bulford, Salisbury Plain	Colonel Gordon.
1901	Scarborough	Colonel Bruce.
1902	Aldershot.	Colonel A. L. Woodland, C.B.
1903	Scarborough	Colonel A. L. Woodland, C.B.
1904	Castleton	Colonel A. L. Woodland, C.B.
1905	Conway	Colonel J. Humble, V.D.
1906	Conway	Colonel Eccles.
1907	Ripon	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1908	Ripon	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1909	Blackhall Rocks	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1910	Rothbury	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1911	Strensall	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1912	Scarborough	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1913	Scarborough	Colonel A. C. Becher.
1914	Conway	Colonel Sears.
1920	Scarborough	Col.-Cmdt. Cumming.
1921	Scarborough	Col.-Cmdt. Cumming.
1922	Catterick	Col.-Cmdt. G. O. Spence, C.B., D.S.O.
1923	Catterick	Col.-Cmdt. G. O. Spence, C.B., D.S.O.
1924	Ripon	Col.-Cmdt. G. O. Spence, C.B., D.S.O.
1925	Pwllheli	Col.-Cmdt. G. O. Spence, C.B., D.S.O.
1926	Catterick	Col.-Cmdt. G. H. Stobart, C.B.E., D.S.O.

APPENDIX V

THESE ARE THE NAMES OF THOSE OFFICERS, WARRANT OFFICERS,
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE BATTALION WHO
LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES THAT THERE MIGHT BE PEACE IN OUR TIME.

THE DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY, 8th BATTALION (TERRITORIAL)

Curry, Ralph, Capt., d. of w., 9/4/18.
Holdsworth, Henry Bernard, Capt., k. in a., 10/4/18.
Johnson, Luther Vincent Burgoyne, Capt., k. in a., 26/4/15.
Lisle, Robert Ernest Benthall, Capt., k. in a., 30/3/18.
Atkinson, Gilbert, Lt., d. of w., 4/10/18.
Bigg, Walter, Lt., k. in a., 27/5/18.
Blair, John, Lt., d. of w., 12/10/18.
Boyd, William, Lt., k. in a., 5/11/16.
Brass, James Robson, Lt., d. of w., 26-27/4/15.
Colley, Robert Archibald, Lt., k. in a., 22/3/18.
Forster, William Oxley, Lt., d. of w., 22/9/16.
Fuller, Leonard Arthur, Lt., k. in a., 17/5/17 (R.F.C.)
Herald, James Herbert Crossland, Lt., d. of w., 24/1/15.
Lawson, William, Lt., k. in a., 27/3/16.
McLare, Alexander Vernon, M.C., Lt., k. in a., 12/4/18.
Marshall, William, Lt., killed, 27/4/15.
Twigg, Albert Ransom, Lt., k. in a., 12/4/18.
Stewart, Vernon Forster, Lt., k. in a., 13/5/17 (R.F.C.).
Watt, Hugo Burr Craig, M.C., Lt., k. in a., 24/8/18.
Banks, Bertie Charlton, 2/Lt., k. in a., 5/11/16.
Bewicke, Ralph Nathaniel, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/9/16.
Callinan, Thomas William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 25/4/15.
Frost, Joshua, 2/Lt., d. of w., 29/9/16.
Harrison, Frederick William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 27/5/18.
Kay, Melville Herbert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 5/11/16.
Lauderdale, John Maitland, 2/Lt., k. in a., 18/9/16.
Lewis, Douglas David Raymond, 2/Lt., d. of w., 22/4/17.
Pybus, Robert, 2/Lt., k. in a., 14/7/16.
Richardson, Basil Hutton, 2/Lt., died, 31/5/15 (in German hands).
Roan, Walter Tait, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/9/16.
Robson, George William, 2/Lt., k. in a., 5/11/16.
Russell, Walter Guthrie, 2/Lt., k. in a., 29/9/16.
Wallace, Robinson, 2/Lt., d. of w., 2/10/16.

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Wilson, Ralph Aylmer, 2/Lt., k. in a., 9/4/18.

Weeks, Francis Mathwin, Capt., k. in a., 11/4/18.

Wordsworth, Joseph Charles Ditch, 2/Lt., k. in a., 6/4/17 (R.F.C.).

1/8th BATTALION.

Ackroyd, John Henry, b. Halifax, e. Halifax, 6122, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/1/17, formerly 29099, Northumberland Fus.

Adams, Harry, e. Northampton (Brackley), 88925, Pte., d., F. & F., 4/6/18, formerly 14/044841, R.A.S.C.

Adamson, William, b. Morpeth, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Pelton), 300014, C.S.M. (W.O., Cl. II), k. in a., F. & F., 5/10/18, D.C.M.

Ainscow, George, e. Durham (Wigan), 2865, A/L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.

Alderslade, Thomas, e. Durham (Kimbleworth), 300596, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 16/4/18.

Alderson, Fred, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 3565, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.

Alderson, James, b. Leamside, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Carville, Durham), 4171, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.

Anderson, Tom, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 6503, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.

Anderson, Alex, e. Bishop Auckland (Wolsingham), 323016, Pte., d., F. & F., 3/11/18.

Archer, William, b. Hamsteels, Co. Durham, e. Hamsteels (Quebec, Co. Durham), 1687, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.

Archer, John, e. Durham (Pelaw Bank, Chester-le-Street), 2738, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/11/15.

Armstrong, Joseph Thomas, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 6501, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/9/16.

Armstrong, James, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 300337, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, D.C.M., M.M.

Armstrong, Robert, e. Durham (South Moor, West Stanley), 300518, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.

Armstrong, John Joseph, e. Gateshead (Chopwell), 302062, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 22/8/18, M.M.

Arnett, William, e. Durham (Ripon), 2776, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 23/9/15.

Arthur, John, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 6507, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.

Arthur, Robert, b. Kirkheaton, Northumberland, e. Hexham (Elsbon, Otterburn), 39813, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.

Ashton, Albert Simms, b. Hebden Bridge, e. Halifax (Hebden Bridge), 80910, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 2/6/18.

Atkins, George, b. Portsmouth, e. Portsmouth, 88918, Pte., d., Germany, 6/10/18, formerly T/26543, R.A.S.C.

Atkinson, Joseph Hewitson, e. Durham (New Shildon, Co. Durham), 2905, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.

Atkinson, Joseph, e. Durham (New Brancepeth, Co. Durham), 300470, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.

Atkinson, Lawrence, b. Bradford, e. Bradford, 301778, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29126, Northumberland Fus.

Atkinson, Fred, b. Huddersfield, e. Huddersfield, 301805, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29116, Northumberland Fus.

Atkinson, Thomas, b. Stainton, Lancs, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Craghead, Durham), 320053, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/10/17.

- Auckland, William, b. Knottingley, e. Pontefract (Castleford), 6116, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 13/11/16, formerly 29894, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Audas, Walter James, b. Goole, e. Goole, 79209, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Baines, Frederick, b. Castleford, e. Pontefract (Whitwood Mere), 301747, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 28328, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Ball, Henry, b. Newcastle, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (South Moor, Durham), 2509, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ball, Sydney Walford, e. Coalville (Bagworth), 40485, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Bamford, John Thomas, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Sacrison, Co. Durham), 2302, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/8/16.
- Barber, William George, b. Hammersmith, London, e. Luton (Dunstable), 79782, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Barker, Alfred, b. Brotton, Yorks, e. Bede College (Guisborough, Yorks), 1941, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Barker, James, e. Durham (Langley Park, Co. Durham), 3424, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/6/16.
- Barker, William, b. Durham (Stanley, Co. Durham), 300512, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Barker, John William, b. Stepney, Middlesex, e. Woolwich (Chertsey), 301993, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/8/17.
- Barnatt, Jesse, b. Heckington, Lincs, e. Sleaford (Heckington), 80887, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Barnett, Robert, b. Easington Lane, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Sherburn Hill), 4195, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Barrett, Bert, b. Bournemouth, e. Bournemouth, 302864, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Barton, Joseph, b. Pelton, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 2425, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Bates, Edgar Dixon, e. Halifax, 301952, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/3/17, formerly 6238, West Riding Regt.
- Batey, Joseph, e. Durham (Tow Law, Co. Durham), 3196, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 13/5/15.
- Baxter, Thomas, e. Durham, 300976, Pte., d., F. & F., 1/8/18.
- Bayles, William Henry, e. Durham (Ferry Hill Co. Durham), 2797, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Beattie, Robert, b. Esh Winning, e. Hamsteels, Co. Durham (Esh Winning), 300205, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Beckwith, Alfred, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (East Stanley), 3520, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, D.C.M.
- Beckwith, Emmerson, b. Tow Law, e. Stanley (Oxhill), 300156, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/4/17.
- Beet, Walter R., b. Wadworth, e. Doncaster, 80881, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Bell, Walter, b. Cornsay, Co. Durham, e. Quebec, Co. Durham (Cornsay Colliery), 2033, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 9/2/16.
- Bell, William, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 3519, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Bell, Eric, b. Kimberley, e. Hucknall (Daybrook, Notts), 80882, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Bell, Harold, b. Burnby, e. Richmond, Yorks (Hawes), 80885, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Bell, Joseph Dalton, e. Durham, 300956, Pte., d., Home, 17/9/17.

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- Bell, James, e. Gateshead (Low Fell), 302269, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
Bellwood, John, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 2741, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 17/9/16.
Bennett, William Joseph, b. Cogan, Glam, e. Cardiff, 85508, Pte., d., F. & F., 12/10/18, formerly 208299, I.W.T. (R.E.).
Bennett, William Boyes, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 301726, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/4/18.
Benzie, Herbert Edward, b. St. Pancras, London, e. Holloway (Islington), 301813, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/24625, K.R.R.
Berryman, Joseph, b. Durham, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2293, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
Best, Harry, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Beamish (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 2561, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/5/15.
Bewley, John, e. Durham, 3722, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
Binns, Trevor Grayson, b. Halifax, e. Halifax, 92911, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
Birbeck, Addison, b. Brandon, Co. Durham, e. Beamish (East Stanley), 2221, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
Birkett, Frederick, e. Durham (Esh Winning, Co. Durham), 3383, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/10/16.
Black, Benjamin William, e. Durham (Great Lumley, Fencehouses), 2983, A/C.S.M., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16, M.M.
Blackburn, Joseph, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2777, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/5/15.
Blake, James Brown, e. Durham (Kimblesworth), 2979, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Blakelock, George, b. Elwick, Co. Durham, e. Ferryhill, Co. Durham (Trimdon Grange), 39276, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
Bland, James, b. Grantham, e. Grantham, 88955, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/4/086302, R.A.S.C.
Blenkiron, Robin, e. Durham (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 2858, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Blenkiron, Joseph, e. Durham (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 2881, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
Blythe, Joseph, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Birtley), 2675, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Bone, Melville Summers, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2207, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/12/15.
Bone, John George, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6526, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/11/16.
Booth, Albert, b. Washington, e. Stanley (West Stanley), 300021, C.S.M. (W.O., Cl. II), k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, D.C.M.
Booth, George Herbert, b. Holmfirth, Yorks, e. Huddersfield (Holmfirth), 301950, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18, formerly 6083, West Riding Regt.
Borthwick, Walter, b. Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Hetton), 2180, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Boulton, William, b. Madeley, e. Newcastle (Onnesley, Crewe), 80886, Pte., d., F. & F., 14/4/18.
Bradley, John James, b. Coundon, Co. Durham, e. Consett (Tow Law, Co. Durham), 4105, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/3/16.
Brannigan, John, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Leadgate), 4070, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/12/16.
Bray, George, b. Sunderland, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 2107, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/3/16.

- Brett, William, e. Durham (Ushaw Moor, Durham), 4323, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/11/16.
- Brewis, John, b. Tanfield, Stanley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Stanley), 2690, A/Cpl., d. of w., Home, 20/6/15.
- Briggs, Thomas, b. Walker, Northumberland, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (East Stanley), 1829, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Brook, Benjamin, b. Holmfirth, Yorks, e. Holmfirth (Huddersfield), 301786, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/11/16, formerly 29373, Northumberland Fus.
- Brooker, Jacob, e. Epsom (Washington, Sussex), 302024, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/9/17.
- Brooks, Robert Ernest, b. Esh, Durham, e. Durham (Ushaw Moor, Durham), 2708, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/5/15.
- Brooks, Joseph Matthew, e. Durham, 300684, Pte., d., F. & F., 14/4/18.
- Brotherton, Joseph, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6525, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Brown, Fred, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 1788, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Brown, John Thomas, b. Boltby, Thirsk, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Fencehouses), 2021, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Brown, Thomas, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton-le-Spring, 2111, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Brown, John, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2773, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Brown, George William, e. Durham (Willington), 3854, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Brown, George, b. Croxdale Colliery, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Croxdale Colliery), 4154, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Brown, Alexander, b. Liverpool, e. Liverpool, 77581, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Brown, Joseph, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 80899, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 21/4/18.
- Brown, Armond, b. Paston, Norfolk, e. Norwich (Paston), 88976, Pte., d., F. & F., 28/9/18, formerly T4/092689, R.A.S.C.
- Brown, James, b. Holmside, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Burnhope, Co. Durham), 301079, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Brown, James, e. Gateshead, 302071, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Brownell, Edward, b. Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 39507, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/9/18.
- Buck, Alfred William, b. Leighton, Norfolk, e. Norwich, 302895, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/17.
- Buckley, John William, b. Sheffield, e. Pontefract (Sheffield), 6101, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/11/16, formerly 29794, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Bullen, William, b. Bournemouth, e. Camberwell (Catford), 295132, Pte., d., F. & F., 5/9/18.
- Bulmer, Edward, b. Grange Villa, Co. Durham, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Catchgate, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 4078, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 4/10/16.
- Bussey, Michael, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 2226, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/5/15.
- Butler, Walter, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 3510, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Butler, Ernest, b. Westminster, Middlesex, e. Piccadilly (Westminster), 301812, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26100, K.R.R.
- Button, Fred, e. Durham (New Brancepeth, Co. Durham), 2866, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/15.

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- Calvert, John, e. Durham (Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham), 300909, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Campbell, James, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2754, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Cannon, George William, b. Rawcliffe, e. Pontefract (Rawcliffe), 75608, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Cantrill, Herbert, b. Alton, Derbyshire, e. Derby (Chesterfield), 67439, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/3/17.
- Carr, James, b. Gateshead, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (South Moor), 4051, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Carrick, Jonathan, e. Stanley, Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 3586, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Carrington, Thomas, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 300907, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/5/18.
- Carroll, John Henry, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 6536, Pte., d., Home, 14/1/17.
- Carter, John William, b. Drighlington, Yorks, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Old Penshaw), 2110, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Carter, Robert, e. Middlesbrough (South Bank), 301169, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 7/11/17.
- Cathcart, George William, b. Penshaw, e. Sunderland (Fencehouses), 75657, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Caygill, Joseph Watson, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 6541, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Caygill, George Edmund, b. Gilling West, Richmond, Yorks, e. Richmond (Gilling West), 204367, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Chambers, John William, e. Chester-le-Street (Plawsworth), 3170, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/7/16.
- Chaplin, Frederick, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Blackhall Mill), 302084, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Chatley, Frederick, e. Holborn (Theobalds Road, W.C.), 30819, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly R/26407, K.R.R.
- Chrisp, Arthur, b. Birtley, Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 1675, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/5/15.
- Chrisp, Thomas, b. Elsdon, e. Bede College (Durham), 300137, C.S.M. (W.O., Cl. II), k. in a., F. & F., 22/6/17, M.M.
- Clark, Charles, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2818, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Clark, George Henry, e. Durham (Langley Park, Co. Durham), 3432, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/10/16.
- Clark, William D., b. Sacriston, e. Durham (Sacriston), 300243, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Clarke, Henry William, b. Barrow, Suffolk, e. Bethnal Green, 301821, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26130, K.R.R.
- Clarney, John, b. Framwellgate, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Sacriston), 1840, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Clipperton, William Charles, e. Durham (West Stanley), 2965, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 20/6/16.
- Close, John William, e. Gateshead (Felling Shore), 302082, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Coates, William Bolton, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, 477, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Coates, Alfred, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 300405, Pte., d., F. & F., 2/10/18.

- Coates, Robert, b. Coundon, Durham, e. Chopwell, Durham, 302080, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Coleman, Arthur, e. Epsom, 301707, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Coleman, Charles Albion, b. Camberwell, e. Lambeth (London), 323004, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 30/3/18.
- Colling, Herbert, e. Gateshead, 302215, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Collins, Dennis, b. Charlestown, Mayo, e. Durham (Birtley, Co. Durham), 2667, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Connell, John, e. Durham (Thornley), 3142, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Cook, Edwin Frank, b. Swindon, Wiltshire, e. Sunderland (Swindon), 40542, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/11/17.
- Cook, Thomas, b. Wigton, Cumberland, e. Wigton, 248046, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 21/2/18, formerly 1609, Border Regt.
- Cook, Eli, b. Pelton, e. Birtley (Portobello), 300335, C.S.M. (W.O., Cl. II.), k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Cooling, Frank William, b. Southwell, Notts, e. Derby (Southwell), 67395, Pte., d., F. & F., 30/3/17.
- Cooper, William, e. Durham, (Sherburn House, Co. Durham), 3932, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Cooper, John Lazarus, e. West Hartlepool, 302874, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Cooper, John William, b. Jarrow, e. Gateshead, 302089, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Cotton, Cyril, b. Bedale, Yorks, e. Pontefract, 80914, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Coulson, Robert, b. Durham, e. Ushaw Moor (Broom Park), 1689, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Coulson, Joseph William, e. Durham (Middlesbrough), 2921, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Cousins, John William, b. Bishop Auckland, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (East Stanley), 2377, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Coxon, William, b. West Stanley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (West Stanley), 2694, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Coxon, John Thomas, e. Stockton (Shotton Colliery), 201041, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Coyle, Martin, b. Kimblesworth, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Birtley, Co. Durham), 2664, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.
- Crankshaw, David, b. Bolton, Lancs, e. Gateshead, 40564, Pte., d., F. & F., 13/10/18.
- Crowther, Frank, b. Todmorden, Yorks, e. Halifax (Todmorden), 6181, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29983, Northumberland Fus.
- Culine, William, b. Barrowby, Yorks, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (Byker, Newcastle), 37245, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Cundall, Lawrence Henry, b. Sutton-on-Forest, Yorks, e. York, 92916, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Curry, Robert, b. Easington Lane, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Hetton-le-Hole), 2176, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Curry, Thomas, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 302214, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Cusson, Ernest, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Framwellgate Moor, Durham), 3930, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Cutmore, James William, e. Durham (Hedley Hill, Tow Law), 2959, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.

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- Cutter, George, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (High Spen), 302231, Pte., d. of w., Home, 23/12/17.
- Davis, Albert Edward, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 2137, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/2/16.
- Davison, Arthur, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2768, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dawson, John, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Beamish (Craghead), 343, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 30/6/16.
- Dawson, Albert, b. Birtley, Gateshead-on-Tyne, e. Birtley (Bewick Main), 2042, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Dawson, Joseph, e. Durham (Sacriston), 2820, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dawson, Alfred, e. Durham (Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham), 2878, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dent, George, b. Spennymoor, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street (Newton, Co. Durham), 2422, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/8/15.
- Dilkes, John, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 2579, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dinsley, James, b. Stockley, Willington, Co. Durham, e. Willington, 302273, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18, M.M.
- Dix, Thomas George, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 301857, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/9/17.
- Dixon, William, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (West Stanley), 3527, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/7/16.
- Dixon, Clifford, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6551, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Dobson, John Henry, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Pelton Fell), 2723, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/4/16.
- Dodds, John Thomas, b. Sunderland, e. Langley Park (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2524, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dodds, Henry, b. Beamish, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish), 4263, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Dodds, David, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Grange Villa, Co. Durham), 300571, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Dodds, Robert, e. Gateshead (Felling), 302096, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Dolan, Robert, b. Sacriston, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Chester Moor, Co. Durham), 2736, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Down, Thomas, e. Durham (South Moor, Stanley, Co. Durham), 2802, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/9/15.
- Downey, Charles, b. North Shields, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (North Shields), 77902, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Dowson, Charles Henry, b. Thornley, Co. Durham, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Tow Law, Co. Durham), 4108, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 23/2/16.
- Drain, Robert, b. Bermondsey, London, e. Hackney Baths (Homerton), 302441, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Dunn, Joseph, e. Ushaw Moor, Co. Durham, 3299, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Dunn, Robert, e. Durham (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 300534, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 15/4/18.
- Dunn, John Tom, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (East Stanley), 300803, L/Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Durkin, James, e. Gateshead, 302099, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Dutton, George, b. Holloway, London, e. Hackney (Kingsland), 302374, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/9/17.

- Elgie, Robert, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (High Fold, Pelton), 201263, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Elliott, John William, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (West Kyo, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 3528, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/2/16.
- Elliott, Martin, e. Durham (Bewick Main), 3739, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/9/16.
- Ellis, Rowland Henry, b. Leeds, e. Selby, 79864, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Emmerson, George William, b. Morton, e. Scunthorpe (Morton), 80508, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Etherington, George, e. Durham (Ushaw Moor, Co. Durham), 300650, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Etherington, John William, b. Crook, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Willington, Co. Durham), 301105, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 21/4/17.
- Evans, William Arthur, e. Norwich, 6702, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 2973, Norfolk Regt.
- Ewing, William, b. Jarrow-on-Tyne, e. Jarrow-on-Tyne, 302871, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Firbank, Joseph, e. Durham, 3784, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Fallon, Ernest, e. Durham (Lanchester, Co. Durham), 3238, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Farmer, William Harry, b. Shelton, Staffs, e. Fenton, 301785, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 149709, R.H. & R.F.A.
- Farrey, Thomas, e. Durham (Lanchester, Co. Durham), 300672, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Fawell, Herbert Britton, b. Crook, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Howden-le-Wear, Durham), 301021, Pte., d., F. & F., 17/10/18.
- Featherstone, George, e. Gateshead, 302103, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Featherstonehaugh, William Samuel, b. Durham, e. Durham, 4094, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Fenton, Thomas, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 3571, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Fenwick, Walter, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2472, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Fenwick, William, e. Hamsteels, Co. Durham, 320056, Sgt., d., F. & F., 7/10/18.
- Ferguson, Joseph, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 42682, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Fletcher, J., e. Chester-le-Street, Pte., d. of w., 1921.
- Fletcher, John Henry, e. Durham (Sacrison, Co. Durham), 2766, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.
- Fletcher, John, b. Manchester, e. Durham (Framwellgate Moor, Durham), 301134, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 31/3/18.
- Fletcher, Chester-le-Street, d. of w., 1920.
- Fletcher, Archibald Francis, b. Umhlali, Zululand, e. Winchester (Itchen, Southampton), 301425, L/Sgt., d., Durban, 27/3/18.
- Fletcher, Stanley, e. West Hartlepool, 320051, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 6/5/17.
- Forde, William, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Burnhope, Co. Durham), 1653, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 22/6/15.
- Forest, Sam, b. Whitwell, Derby, e. Whitwell (Mansfield), 301902, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17, formerly 46396, R.H. & R.F.A.
- Foster, Joseph, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6558, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Foster, Harry, b. Leeds, e. Sheffield, 301766, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 26417, K.O.Y.L.I.

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- France, Robert Albert King, b. Leatherhead, Surrey, e. Scotts Camp (Hasting, Northumberland), 2926, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- French, Herbert, b. Guiseley, Yorks, e. Keighley (Guiseley), 80447, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- French, James Stanley, b. Redruth, Cornwall, e. Redruth (Plymouth), 302867, Pte., d., F. & F., 26/7/18.
- Fuller, John George, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Birtley, 302049, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Gaffney, Peter, e. Durham (Framwellgate, Co. Durham), 3927, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Garth, Harold Percy, b. Leeds, e. Leeds, 88935, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/6/18, formerly T/260430, R.A.S.C.
- Garthwaite, Joseph, e. Bishop Auckland, 301670, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 18/7/17.
- Gee, Andrew, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6565, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Gibbon, John Wilfred, b. Crook, Co. Durham, e. Hamsteels, Co. Durham (Waterhouses), 1386, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Gibson, Thomas, b. Bishop Auckland, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa, Pelton), 4131, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Gibson, Thomas, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne (Chopwell, Co. Durham), 6569, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Gill, William Henry, b. Sheffield, e. Pontefract (Sheffield), 6089, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/11/16, formerly 29841, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Gill, Albert, e. Bradford, 301804, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/8/17, formerly 28395, Northumberland Fus.
- Gilroy, Gordon, e. Durham (Newcastle-on-Tyne), 3640, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/16.
- Goddard, Tom Broughton, b. Leicester, e. Leicester, 44097, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 21515, Leicester Regt.
- Gorrill, Henry, b. Warmsworth, Yorks, e. Maltby (Stainton), 301877, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/4/17, formerly R/20254, K.R.R.
- Gowland, George, b. Bearpark, Durham, e. Durham (Sherburn), 3897, Pte., d., F. & F., 1/9/16.
- Gowland, John Thomas, b. Cornforth, e. Coxhoe, Co. Durham (Ferryhill), 200687, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/12/17.
- Graddon, Reginald William, b. Benfieldside, Co. Durham, e. Consett (Blackhill), 30412, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 28/8/18.
- Graham, Richard, b. Heighington, Co. Durham, e. Ferryhill (Kirk Merrington), 19/1354, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.
- Graham, William Albert, b. Tow Law, Co. Durham, e. Tow Law, Co. Durham, 301718, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Graham, Mark, e. Gateshead, 302109, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Gray, James, e. Beamish, Co. Durham, 3042, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/1/16.
- Greathead, Joseph, b. Northallerton, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 490, Cpl., d., Home, 3/10/16.
- Green, John Edward, b. Penshaw, Co. Durham, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Washington), 2114, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Green, Charles, e. Newcastle (York), 6191, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/11/16, formerly 140752, R.H. and R.F.A.
- Greenfield, Cecil, b. Stockton-on-Tees, e. Richmond, Yorks (Stockton-on-Tees), 79194, Pte., d., F. & F., 20/9/18.
- Gregory, Kenneth Tom, b. York, e. Richmond, Yorks (York), 76405, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.

- Griffiths, John Thomas, b. Camden Town, London, e. West London (Fulham), 77625, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 45389, Worcester Regt.
- Griffiths, Edward John, b. Rhondda, Glam, e. Pentre, Glam (Treherbert), 88986, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/2/9869, R.A.S.C.
- Guire, William, b. Pelton, Co. Durham, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Newfield, Newcastle), 2558, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Hair, Jeremiah, e. Blaydon (Swalwell, Co. Durham), 6767, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Haldenby, Joseph, b. Hull, e. Hull, 81112, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Hall, George, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 2139, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/7/16.
- Hall, George Robert, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 6602, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Hall, William Graham, b. Hutton Rudby, Yorks, e. Durham (Hutton Rudby), 2324, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Hall, Cyril Stanley, b. South Shields, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne, 2364, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/4/15, formerly T/149, Northumberland Infantry Brigade Co., R.A.S.C.
- Hall, Charles, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Hetton-le-Hole), 3082, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Hall, Thomas, 3766, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hall, Thomas George, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa), 270018, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 26/8/18.
- Hall, Joseph, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (West Pelton, Durham), 300573, Pte., d., F. & F., 20/5/18.
- Hall, Thomas, e. Durham, 300940, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hall, John Blackett, e. Durham (South Shields), 300947, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/7/18.
- Hall, William, e. Gateshead, 302124, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 23/6/17.
- Halliday, Frederick, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 300013, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Hambleton, Charles, b. Southwark, Surrey, e. Deptford, 301998, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17.
- Hamilton, William, b. Durham, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 2263, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Hann, Matthew, e. Durham, 3650, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Hannaford, William Percival, b. Dadbrooke, Devon, e. Newton Abbot, (Dartmouth), 302842, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Hannington, William, e. Blaydon, Co. Durham (Swalwell, Co. Durham), 6592, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/9/16.
- Hanson, James Walter, b. Sunderland, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 973, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Harding, Leslie, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6601, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Hardy, Albert Edward, b. Islington, London, N., e. Finsbury Barracks (Essex Road, London, N.), 295116, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Harland, James, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, 2179, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Harrison, John, e. Durham (Brandon Colliery, Co. Durham), 300908, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Harrison, Daniel, b. Westminster, e. Southwark (Newington Butts, London, S.E.), 301881, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/11/16, formerly R/27042, K.R.R.
- Harrop, Samuel, b. Salford, e. Manchester (Salford), 85533, Pte., d., F. & F., 1/9/18, formerly 28875, R.W. Fus.

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- Hart, William Johnson, b. Eastwood, Notts, e. Nottingham (Eastwood), 80971, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Harwood, James, e. Bolton, 78800, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 4940, East Lancs Regt.
- Harwood, James, e. Durham (Lanchester, Co. Durham), 300942, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hastings, John Arthur, b. Croft, Lincs, e. Spalding, Lincs, 6266, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/1/17.
- Haswell, John, b. Wingate, Co. Durham, e. West Hartlepool (Hesleden), 21342, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/18.
- Haswell, Edward Bruce, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 302116, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/6/17.
- Hatton, Norman Charles, b. Normanton, Yorks, e. Sheffield, 79077, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/3/18.
- Hawkes, Archibald, b. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street (Plawsworth Station, Chester-le-Street), 1626, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Haywood, Thomas, b. Bethnal Green, Middlesex, e. Bethnal Green, 301882, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18, formerly R/26137, K.R.R.
- Heeley, Arthur, e. Mirfield, 301910, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 3495, West Riding Regt.
- Hemingway, Fred, e. Dewsbury (Batley), 301743, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Hemingway, Thomas, e. Dewsbury, 351281, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 3/6/18.
- Hemsley, John Leonard, b. Warbleton, Sussex, e. Chichester (Jarvis Brook, Sussex), 301997, Pte., d., F. & F., 2/10/18.
- Henderson, George Edward, b. Hetton, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Hetton-le-Hole), 2175, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Henderson, James, e. Gateshead, 302113, Pte., d., F. & F., 14/8/18.
- Henderson, William, b. Tow Law, Co. Durham, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Tow Law), 301068, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Herbert, Thomas Gibson, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Houghton-le-Spring (Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham), 2514, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Herbert, James Henry, b. Spennymoor, Co. Durham, e. Newcastle (West Hartlepool), 75146, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/5/18.
- Heron, Edward, e. Durham (West Rainton, Co. Durham), 300874, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Heslop, John Glenwright, e. Durham (Hunwick, Co. Durham), 300547, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Hewison, Thomas, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 300796, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Higgins, Lewis Rood, b. Beckington, Frome, e. Sheffield, 301748, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29809, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Hill, Fred, b. Bingley, Yorks, e. Keighley (Bingley), 80957, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 14/4/18.
- Hill, Cyril Crowder, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 301732, Pte., d., Home, 29/4/17.
- Hill, James Oliver, b. Sowerby Bridge, Yorks, e. Halifax (Sowerby Bridge), 301780, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29485, Northumberland Fus.
- Hind, Henry Warren, e. Doncaster, 59491, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/7/18.
- Hind, Thomas Alfred, b. Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Newtown, Horton), 2274, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.

- Hindmarch, Thomas, b. Durham, e. Durham, 3726, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Hinton, John William, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 3488, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/2/16.
- Histed, Thomas Frederick, b. Bermondsey, e. London (Bermondsey), 91388, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 4/11244, Hussars.
- Hodgens, William, e. Gateshead, 302119, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 4/11/17.
- Hodgson, Philip, e. Durham, 3686, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hodgson, George Albert, b. Westgate, Sunderland, e. Durham (Weardale, Co. Durham), 4210, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hodgson, William, b. Benwell, Northumberland, e. Gateshead, 6765, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hogg, Robert, b. Whitburn, Sunderland, e. Bede College, Durham, 1955, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Hogg, Robert, e. Durham (South Shields), 2742, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Hogg, Anthony, e. Gateshead (Dunston-on-Tyne), 302125, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Holland, Edward (Durham), 300621, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Hollis, John William, b. Stourbridge, e. Smethwick (West Bromwich), 80964, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Holt, Clifford, b. South Kirkby, Yorks, e. Pontefract (South Kirkby), 301757, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17, formerly 20844, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Hope, Andrew, b. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street (Framwellgate Moor, Durham), 2487, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Hopper, Wilfred, b. Croxdale, e. Houghton (Hetton-le-Hole), 300262, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Hopson, Thomas, b. Sunderland, e. Durham (Leamside, Co. Durham), 2403, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/7/16.
- Horner, Alfred Croft, b. Waterhouses, Durham, e. Durham (Esh Winning, Co. Durham), 4067, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Houchen, John, b. Browney, Langley Moor, Durham, e. Durham (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 2646, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Hoult, Arthur, b. West Hartlepool, e. Houghton (Easington Lane, Co. Durham), 1781, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Houseman, Walter, b. Brearton, Yorks, e. Harrogate (Dacre, Yorks), 301883, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18, formerly R/28364, K.R.R.
- Howard, Alan, b. Wigan, e. Deaf Hill, Co. Durham (Trimdon Grange, Co. Durham), 70959, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Howard, Stanley Hardy, b. Doncaster, e. Doncaster (Snaith), 80932, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Howarth, John, b. Primrose Hill, Yorks, e. Huddersfield, 301782, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29509, Northumberland Fus.
- Howden, John Thomas, b. Cockfield Fell, Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham, 2079, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Howe, Richard, b. Crook, Co. Durham, e. Ushaw Moor, Co. Durham (New Brancepeth, Co. Durham), 853, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Howells, George Henry, b. Wolverhampton, e. Lichfield (Coreley), 80191, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Hudson, William, b. Usworth, Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham, 1364, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/2/16.
- Hudson, William, e. Durham, 3619, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Hudspeth, Lionel, e. Durham (Pity Me, Durham), 2934, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.

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- Huggins, Cpl., 25/4/15.
Huggins, John Warwick, e. Durham (Whitehaven, Cumberland), 2913, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/11/15.
Huggins, Herbert Thomas, b. Bath, e. Bath, 91390, Pte., d., F. & F., 25/8/18, formerly 9135, Royal Munster Fus.
Hughes, Phillip, b. South Shields, e. Bishop Auckland (Coundon), 1389, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
Hughes, John Robert, e. Bishop Auckland, 245072, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
Hume, Arthur, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 6735, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/1/17.
Hunt, James, b. Occold, Suffolk, e. Driffield, 88932, Pte., d., F. & F., 15/6/18.
Huntbatch, William Arthur, b. Burslem, Staffs, e. Hanley (Burslem), 71001, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
Hunter, William Harrison, b. Houghton, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, 2513, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Hunter, Abram, e. Houghton, Co. Durham (Easington Lane, Co. Durham), 3011, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Hunter, James Arthur, b. Greenhead, Northumberland, e. Newcastle (Greenhead), 75288, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
Hunter, George, b. Pelton, Chester-le-Street, e. Pelton, 300036, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
Hurlin, Joseph Arthur, e. Bethnal Green, 301822, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26124, K.R.R.
Hurry, Samuel, b. Durham, e. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 2696, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Husband, Arthur, b. Lingdale, Cleveland, e. Seaham Harbour (Murton S.O.), 40552, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
Hussey, John William, b. Chopwell, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Pelton), 4226, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/11/16.
Hutchinson, James William, b. Barnard Castle, e. Sunderland, 302034, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
Illingworth, Charles Wilton, b. Ossett, Yorks, e. Ossett, 301758, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29864, K.O.Y.L.I.
Illingworth, George Stanley, b. Honley, Yorks, e. Huddersfield, 301908, Pte., d. of w., Home, 7/5/17, formerly 29117, Northumberland Fus.
Jackson, Thomas, b. Lamesley, Gateshead, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Grange Villa), 2556, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
Jackson, William, e. Durham, 3618, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/7/16.
Jackson, Isaac, b. Durham, e. Durham, 3717, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
Jackson, Alfred John, b. Lichfield, e. Lichfield, 66535, Pte., d., F. & F., 6/10/18, formerly 46008, North Staffs Regt.
Jackson, James Harold Edmund, e. Derby, 301913, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 45864, R.H. & R.F.A., D.C.M.
Jackson, Richard, e. Gateshead, 302133, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
James, Arthur, b. Burton-on-Trent, e. Burton-on-Trent, 80448, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 35677, North Staffs Regt.
James, Llewellyn, e. Blaydon-on-Tyne, 302238, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
Jarvis, Thomas William, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2622, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
Jarvis, George William, b. Goole, e. Goole (Yorks), 301823, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/25111, K.R.R.
Jeavons, Joseph William, b. Tipton, Staffs, e. Tipton, 75391, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.

- Jellyman, Albert Charles, b. Osmaston, Derby, e. Derby (Osmaston), 89004, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/9/18, formerly 2296, R.A.M.C.
- Johnson, John, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Team Colliery, Co. Durham), 3568, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Johnson, Ernest David, b. Hull, e. Hull, 80943, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/7/18.
- Johnson, John (Berwick-on-Tweed), 85491 Pte., d., F. & F., 31/7/18.
- Jones, William Henry, e. Durham (Kimblesworth), 43698, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/5/17.
- Jopling, John Robert, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 302046, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 20/4/17.
- Joyce, Michael, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (Willington Quay), 6155, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 24276, Northumberland Fus.
- Kaye, Harold, b. Huddersfield, e. Huddersfield, 301793, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29505, Northumberland Fus.
- Kaye, Percy, b. Leeds, e. Leeds (Lower Wortley, Leeds), 350983, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Keeney, John Patrick, e. Durham (Shadforth), 3321, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Kell, Joseph, e. Durham, 3780, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Key, John Willie, b. Batley, Yorks, e. Batley, 301777, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29862, K.O.Y.L.I.
- King, John, b. Rowhedge, Essex, e. Wivenhoe (Rowhedge), 85557, Pte., d., F. & F., 22/8/18, formerly 1615, Essex Regt.
- King, Albert Walter, b. Plaistow, Essex, e. East Ham, 302911, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Kirkwood, Joseph William, b. Durham, e. Durham (Carville, Durham), 2498, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 2/10/15.
- Kirton, Arthur, b. Burnhope, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Burnhope), 1835, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/2/16.
- Kitson, David, e. Stourbridge (Kingswinford, Dudley), 200804, Pte., d., F. & F., 6/10/18.
- Knowles, Sydney, b. Rotherham, e. Rotherham, 6268, Pte., d., F. & F., 19/12/16.
- Kyle, John William, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 302263, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 10/8/17.
- Laidler, Frederick, b. Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 148, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Lamb, Albert Victor, b. Witton Gilbert, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2083, Bugler, k. in a., F. & F., 28/6/16.
- Lamb, Thomas Clement, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 6611, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Lambert, Abraham, e. Durham (High Wheatley Hill, Co. Durham), 3395, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.
- Larmouth, Robert, b. Wickham, Gateshead, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Craghead, Co. Durham), 2566, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/3/16.
- Lawrie, William, b. Norham, Berwick-on-Tweed, e. Ashington, Northumberland (Hirst, Northumberland), 2555, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15, formerly 1059, Northumberland Fus.
- Learoyde, Thomas William, e. Durham (Wheatley Hill, Co. Durham), 3261, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Leason, Wilson, e. Scarborough, 250672, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18, formerly 28668, Yorks Regt.

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- Lee, Robert, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa, Co. Durham), 3067, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/2/16.
- Lee, John Joseph, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 3351, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/1/16.
- Lentell, Richard, b. Gateshead-on-Tyne, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6612, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Lewis, William, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, 2262, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/7/16.
- Leybourne, Thomas William, b. Ettringham, Medomsley, Durham, e. Durham (Chester Moor, Durham), 2714, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 28/6/16.
- Liddemore, William Walter, b. Cullingworth, Yorks, e. Keighley, 300833, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29992, Northumberland Fus.
- Liddle, Thomas, e. Durham, 3702, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/16.
- Lindsey, Alexander, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 88919, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/30351, R.A.S.C.
- Liptrot, James, b. Lamberhead, Lancs, e. Durham (Langley Moor, Co. Durham), 4177, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Little, Joseph, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Pelton), 3061, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Litton, Charles Richard, b. St. Pancras, London, e. London (St. Pancras), 301713, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Lomas, Allen, b. Royton, Lancs, e. Royton, 78804, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 4555, Manchester Regt.
- Long, Robert Charles, b. Fulham, Middlesex, e. Fulham, 6207, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26412, K.R.R.
- Long, Robert, b. Leeds, e. Harrogate, 80958, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Longmuir, Robert Henry, e. Durham (Nettlesworth, Co. Durham), 3446, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/1/16.
- Lowery, Thomas, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 222, L/Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 18/5/15.
- Lowes, Thomas, b. Edmondsley, Co. Durham, e. Sacriston, Co. Durham (Edmondsley), 40267, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Lowson, Thomas, e. Houghton, Co. Durham (Hetton-le-Hole), 3007, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Luck, Stephen, b. Howden-le-Wear, Co. Durham, e. Barnard Castle (Leadgate, Co. Durham), 24582, Pte., d., F. & F., 11/10/18.
- Lummas, Bert, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 79674, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 32269, West Riding Regt.
- Maddison, Samuel William, e. Durham (West Stanley, Co. Durham), 2950, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Maggs, William, e. Bishop Auckland (Coundon, Co. Durham), 295065, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Magor, Anthony, b. Swansea, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (South Moor, Durham), 4119, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/6/16.
- Mallinson, Harry, e. Huddersfield, 301915, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 5710, West Riding Regt.
- Malone, Robert, b. Silksworth, Sunderland, e. Durham (Langley Moor), 17, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Mansell, Henry, b. Blotwich, Walsall, Staffs, e. Blotwich (Craghead, Co. Durham), 1349, Sgt., d. of w., F. & F., 3/4/16.
- Mansfield, William, b. Leicester, e. Leicester (Mansfield), 67546, Pte., d., F. & F., 17/4/17.
- Marley, John William, b. Cleckheaton, e. Bradford, 80925, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.

- Marsh, Thomas Henry, b. Walberton, Sussex, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6636, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/9/16.
- Marsh, Richard, b. Burnley, Lancs, e. Burnley, 81207, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/7/18, formerly 48804, Lancashire Fus.
- Marshall, Frederick, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Stanley, Co. Durham, 2075, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Martin, William, b. Beamish, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Craghead), 2118, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Martin, George, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa, Co. Durham), 3171, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 17/3/16.
- Martin, Frederick, b. Nottingham, e. Durham (Richmond, Yorks), 3934, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Martin, Herbert, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 80982, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Marvell, James, b. Bradford, e. Bradford, 301973, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 14/4/17, formerly 6066, West Riding Regt.
- Marwood, Joseph, e. Beamish, Co. Durham, 3582, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Mason, Joseph, b. Plawsworth, Durham, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (New Town, Birtley), 2068, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Mason, Michael, e. Durham, 3817, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Mason, Thomas, b. Gateshead, e. Bishop Auckland, 2107, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/7/15.
- Mason, Joseph, b. Dipton, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Tantobie, Co. Durham), 2117, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Masters, Charles, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, 2268, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 18/6/15.
- Masterson, Frank, b. Dipton, Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Tanfield Lea), 1679, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 14/3/16.
- Matthews, Cecil Edward, b. Leicester, e. Leicester, 79698, Pte., d., F. & F., 24/10/18.
- Mawson, William George, b. Spennymoor, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Washington, Co. Durham), 4176, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/9/16.
- Maxwell, Thomas, e. Durham, 3737, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- May, Joseph, e. Durham (Birtley, S.O. Durham), 2846, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Maycock, Frederick Ernest, e. Leicester (Market Harborough), 6059, Pte., d., F. & F., 8/3/17.
- Merrigan, John, b. South Shields, e. Langley Park, Co. Durham, 2504, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Middleton, John, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 2731, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/5/15.
- Miller, John William, b. Scarborough, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Burnhope, Co. Durham), 1824, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Mills, William, e. Durham (Brandon Colliery, Co. Durham), 3139, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Mitchell, John Edward, b. Halifax, e. Halifax, 301917, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 2628, West Riding Regt.
- Mitton, Henry Collingwood, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 302139, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Moffat, Thomas George, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 1216, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.
- Mole, Ralph, b. Edmondsley, Co. Durham, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (West Pelton), 300321, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 24/1/17.

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- Molen, Joshua, e. Canning Town (Plaistow), 6208, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Moody, George, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Witton Gilbert, Co. Durham), 2501, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Moore, James, b. Denby, Huddersfield, e. Durham (Bede College), 2339, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/5/15.
- Moore, John George, e. Durham (Leamside, Co. Durham), 3090, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/2/16.
- Moore, James Edward, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6634, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Moore, Albert Edward, b. Leicester, e. Glen Parva, Barracks (Leicester), 24883, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 36452, Life Guards.
- Moreland, James Loftus, e. Bishop Auckland, 3741, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/9/16.
- Morgan, John, e. Durham, 3451, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Morgan, William Alvin, e. Durham (Ushaw Moor, Co. Durham), 300768, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Morley, Thomas, b. Stanley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (East Stanley), 300389, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17.
- Morris, Wilton, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 3080, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Morrison, James, e. Durham (Pittington, Co. Durham), 3138, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/6/15, D.C.M.
- Morrod, William Bellerby, b. Acomb, York, e. York (Acomb), 301892, Pte., d., Home, 12/3/17, formerly R/28348, K.R.R.
- Morrow, John, b. Gateshead-on-Tyne, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6620, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 3/10/16.
- Mortimer, Nathaniel, b. Barony, Lanarkshire, e. Glasgow, 85542, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 11/6/18, formerly 205293, R.E. (I.W.T.).
- Mounsey, George Thomas, b. Byker, Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Durham (West Stanley, Durham), 2702, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/4/15.
- Mullet, Fred Walter, b. Gillingham, Kent, e. Newcastle (Gillingham, Kent), 4/8780, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 25/3/18, M.M.
- Mulrooney, James, b. Bradford, e. Bradford, 79862, Pte., d., F. & F., 16/9/18.
- Munday, Frederick David, b. Egham, Surrey, e. Hounslow (Staines), 88951, Pte., d., F. & F., 16/10/18, formerly T/26310, R.A.S.C.
- Mundie, Andrew Grant, b. Glasgow, e. Wakefield, 301773, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 26242, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Murphy, Philip Edward, b. Coundon, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, 4239, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Murphy, Michael, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 302147, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Murton, Stephen, e. Durham (Broomside, Durham), 4185, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/12/16.
- Musgrove, James, e. Chopwell (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 302150, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Mustard, James Francis Gordon, e. Gateshead, 295122, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17.
- McArdle, Michael, e. Durham, 3860, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 2/10/16.
- McClen, Thomas, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 302264, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- McConnell, Patrick, b. Newtownards, Co. Down, e. Belfast (Berwick-on-Tweed), 85487, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly W.R. 505421, R.E.

- McCracken, George, b. Belfast, e. Belfast, 85544, Pte., d., F. & F., 12/10/18, formerly 200380, R.E.
- McFarlane, Charles Michael, e. Holborn, London, 301826, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17.
- McGee, James, e. Gateshead, 6771, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 19/9/16.
- McGregor, Reuben, e. Durham (Brandon, Co. Durham), 300766, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- McInnes, Donald Thomson, e. Rothesay (Port Bannatyne), 201320, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 1436, Argyll (Mtn.) Battery.
- Mackey, William, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Stanley (Beamish, Durham), 301123, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.
- McPherson, William, e. Durham (Leamside, Co. Durham), 3145, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/7/16.
- McPherson, Joseph, b. Escombe, Durham, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Annfield Plain), 301064, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 24/4/17.
- Naulls, Charles Barr, b. Grimsby, e. Grimsby, 302756, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 20/9/17.
- Neill, George, b. Ballymore, Co. Armagh, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Newcastle-on-Tyne), 2382, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/5/15.
- Newall, John Fenton, e. Houghton, 3115, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/11/16.
- Newton, Matthew, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Springwell, Gateshead), 3421, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 3/3/16.
- Nichols, James Alfred, e. Durham (Middlesbrough), 2915, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Nicholls, Joseph, e. Blaydon-on-Tyne (West Ayton), 302243, k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Nichols, William Harold, b. Thornaby-on-Tees, e. Middlesbrough (Thornaby), 81134, Pte., d., F. & F., 21/11/18.
- Nicholson, Charles, e. Bishop Auckland (Durham), 3827, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 20/12/15.
- North, John Frederick, b. Southwark, Surrey, e. London (Blackfriars), 78590, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 29019, R.A.S.C.
- O'Connor, Arthur, e. Durham, 301004, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Ogden, Robert, b. Bradford, e. Bradford, 79723, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 32485, West Riding Regt.
- Oliver, Thomas, b. Medomsley, Consett, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 1611, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- O'Neill, Thomas, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 3358, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ord, George, b. Wingate, Co. Durham, e. West Hartlepool, 31848, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Osborne, Robert, b. Houghton-le-Spring, e. Gateshead, 302157, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.
- Outram, David, b. Chesterfield, e. Derby, 80946, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Pagden, Charles William, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 301756, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/6/17, formerly 29795, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Page, James, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 39290, Pte., d., F. & F., 7/9/18.
- Palmer, Frederick William, b. Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham, e. Sunderland (Easington Colliery, Co. Durham), 39568, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Palmer, Thomas Charles, b. Stepney, Middlesex, e. Stratford (Upton Lane, London, E.), 301828, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 36430, K.R.R.
- Panton, Henry, b. Orby, Lincs, e. Louth (Alford), 77915, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.

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- Parker, Albert, b. London, E.C., e. Finsbury Barracks (London), 323009, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/2/18.
- Parkin, Harry, b. Hartlepool, e. Darlington, 39294, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Parkinson, William Willis, b. Hamsteels, Co. Durham, e. Hamsteels, 2091, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Parlett, William, b. Dipton, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham, 1832, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Pashley, George, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 59475, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/5/18.
- Patterson, John, e. Durham (Bedlington, Northumberland), 2981, A/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 27/11/15.
- Patterson, Ralph, b. South Shields, e. South Shields, 24917, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Pattinson, William Henry, b. Hantley, Westmorland, e. Keighley, 301794, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29496, Northumberland Fus.
- Pattinson, Edward Fidler, b. Haltwhistle, e. Durham (Haltwhistle), 300350, Pte., d., F. & F., 28/2/18.
- Pattison, Joseph, b. Catterick, e. Bishop Auckland, 80924, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/5/18.
- Pattison, William, e. Bishop Auckland (Crook, Co. Durham), 273050, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/8/17.
- Peacock, Charles Edward, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa, S.O.), 3024, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/16.
- Pearson, Walter, b. Freiston, Lincs, e. Boston, Lincs, 273052, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/7/18.
- Pearson, Thomas, b. Lanchester, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Langley Park, Co. Durham), 300221, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Peart, Joseph Vickers, b. Stanhope, Co. Durham, e. Ferry Hill (Coxhoe), 301841, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Pedwell, Joseph, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2450, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 19/9/16.
- Pennington, Daniel, b. Shincliffe, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Shincliffe, Co. Durham), 2247, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Perry, John Thomas, b. Mile End, Middx, e. Stratford (London), 301829, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26429, K.R.R.
- Phillips, Sidney Archibald, b. Ilfracombe, e. Taunton, 276352, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/3/18.
- Pickering, William, b. Sacriston, Co. Durham, e. Sacriston, 2397, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/7/16.
- Pickles, James, e. Todmorden, 301795, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29392, Northumberland Fus.
- Pinkney, Thomas, e. Bishop Auckland (Cockfield, Co. Durham), 4073, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Pitt, Robert William, b. Felling, Gateshead, e. Felling (Stanley, Co. Durham), 1210, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Pooley, Thomas, e. Durham (East Hedley Hope, Tow Law, Co. Durham), 2960, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Porteous, Hereward, e. Durham (Waterhouses), 3183, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Powell, Charles Leonard, b. Stanton-on-Arrow, Herefordshire, e. Whitchurch (Pembroke), 85502, Pte., d., F. & F., 19/10/18, formerly 215530, R.E.
- Prest, Robert Johnson, b. Stockton e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 300233, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.

- Preston, John Robert, b. Bowes, e. Darlington (Bowes), 80930, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Price, Thomas James, b. Pontardawe, Glam, e. Durham, A/C.Q.M.S., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Price, Aaron, b. Burslem, e. Hanley (Burslem), 91347, Pte., d., F. & F., 2/10/18.
- Prickett, John Edward, b. Windermere, e. Bede College, Durham, 1969, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Priest, Josiah, b. Stockton, e. Jersey (Walsall), 53475, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/17, formerly 18362, South Staffs Regt.
- Priestley, Henry, b. Bradford, e. Darlington, 80188, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Proudlock, George, e. Gateshead (Wrekenton), 302169, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Punshon, Harold Finlay, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 2126, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Purcell, James, b. Kilmanagh, e. Kilkenny, 91383, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 5816, Royal Irish R.
- Purvis, Robert, b. South Shields, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 2257, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Purvis, John, e. Durham (Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham), 2875, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Quinn, Andrew, e. Houghton-le-Spring, 3489, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Quinn, John, b. Sacriston, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 15918, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/3/18.
- Rabbitt, Ephraim, b. Edwinstowe, Notts, e. Worksop (Edwinstowe), 301764, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 25/4/17, formerly 25916, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Ragdale, John Thomas, e. Wolverhampton, 80929, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Raitt, James, b. Spennymoor, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Low Spennymoor), 301093, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Ramshaw, John George, e. Durham (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 2857, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Randall, Charles, b. Sydenham, London, e. Lewisham (Upper Sydenham), 301890, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/18, formerly R/26060, K.R.R.
- Raper, Thomas, b. Langley Park, Co. Durham, e. Langley Park, 2523, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ray, John William, e. Gateshead, 302249, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Read, Thomas James, e. Mill Hill (Harrow), 301716, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/6/17.
- Reed, Thomas, e. Durham, 300996, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 24/6/17.
- Rees, George Richard, e. Woolwich (Plumstead), 85551, Pte., d., F. & F., 15/10/18, formerly 11978, R. West Kents.
- Reynard, Fred, b. Harrogate, e. Harrogate, 80947, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Reynolds, Abraham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (New Kyo, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 3541, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Rice, James, b. Gateshead, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 2455, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/6/15.
- Richards, Arthur David, b. Bilston, Staffs, e. Stockton-on-Tees, 200408, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Richardson, Bertie, b. Hetton, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 1482, Cpl., d., Home, 2/1/15.

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- Ridd, Alfred Thomas, b. Barnstaple, Devon, e. Barnstaple, 302297, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/7/17.
- Ridley, John Edward, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 3542, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/3/16.
- Ridley, Benjamin, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 300835, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 23/9/18.
- Riley, Henry, b. Felling, Gateshead, e. Chester-le-Street (New Town, Hebburn-on-Tyne), 2421, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/1/16.
- Riley, Harry, b. Accrington, Lancs, e. Accrington, 19839, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Ritchie, James, b. Birtley, Co. Durham (Springwell, Durham), 3262, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 21/4/16.
- Roberts, David Henry, b. Birkburton, Yorks, e. Huddersfield, 301806, Pte., d., F. & F., 22/9/18, formerly 28431, Northumberland Fus.
- Robinson, Benjamin, e. Durham (Burnhope, Co. Durham), 3166, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 26/5/15.
- Robinson, James, b. Beamish, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Pelton, Co. Durham), 3949, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/1/16.
- Robinson, Alfred, b. Middlesbrough, e. Richmond (Middlesbrough), 75613, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 13/10/18.
- Robinson, Fred William, b. Tunstall, Yorks, e. Leyburn (Bedale), 85217, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Robinson, James Edward, b. Finsbury, Middx., e. Whitehall (London, E.C.), 301833, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26442, K.R.R.
- Robinson, James William, b. East Boldon, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 301698, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/6/17.
- Robson, William, b. Sacriston, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 1707, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 24/5/15.
- Robson, Alfred James, b. Washington, Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley (Washington), 1803, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/2/16.
- Robson, John, b. Sacriston, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Sacriston), 2292, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/11/15.
- Robson, William, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 2494, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Robson, Robert Henry, e. Durham (Catecote, West Hartlepool), 3019, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 4/5/15.
- Robson, Isaac Ernest, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 300450, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Robson, Robert William, e. Durham (Bearpark, Durham), 300775, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Robson, Robert William, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 302172, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Rochell, Thomas, R., e. Huddersfield, 301925, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/9/17, formerly 4504, West Riding Regt.
- Rome, Philip, e. Durham (Brandon, Co. Durham), 273076, Pte., d., F. & F., 13/10/18.
- Rompen, Oscar, b. South Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Houghton, Co. Durham (Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham), 1868, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ross, Thomas, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 2546, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ross, Christopher, e. Gateshead (Felling-on-Tyne), 302227, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.

- Rothwell, William John, b. Westminster, London, e. East Ham, 301896, Pte., d. of w., Home, 5/5/18, formerly R/27036, K.R.R.
- Rowden, Henry, b. Alnwick, Northumberland, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6660, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Rowe, Thomas Harvey, b. Medomsley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, Co. Durham, 40566, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Rowell, Robert, b. Seaham Harbour, e. Seaham Harbour, 36245, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 22/3/18.
- Rudolph, Conrad Thomas, b. Hammersmith, Middx, e. West London (Hammersmith), 301895, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18, formerly R/27005, K.R.R.
- Runciman, John Thomas, e. Durham, 300975, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Rundle, Edward, b. Sunderland, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 2261, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Rutter, Arthur, b. Athone, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 2128, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16, D.C.M.
- Rutter, Richard, b. Windy Nook, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Windy Nook), 2729, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ryan, James, e. Durham (Brandon Colliery, Co. Durham), 3379, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Ryan, Patrick, b. Hoxton, e. London (Bishopgate, London, E.C.), 43337, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 16/2/18, formerly R/26425, K.R.R.
- Ryans, Edward, e. Durham (Esh Winning), 4048, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Sammon, Owen, e. Durham (Broom Park, Co. Durham), 3466, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/11/16.
- Sams, Ernest Edmunds, b. Poplar, Middlesex, e. Poplar, 53140, Pte., d., Home, 30/6/18, formerly R/31035, K.R.R.
- Sargeant, George, b. Toronto, Canada, e. Newcastle (Gateshead), 1926, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Sawyer, John, b. Langley, Derby, e. Long Eaton, 301808, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 47154, R.H. and R.F.A.
- Sayers, William, e. Durham, 300991, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Scholey, Wilfred, e. Sheffield, 79996, Pte., d., F. & F., 10/9/18, formerly 34090, York and Lancs Regt.
- Scott, John, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham, 461, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Scott, John, b. Holmside, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Burnhope, Co. Durham), 2026, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Scott, Edward, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 6667, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Scott, James, b. Hartlepool, e. West Hartlepool (Hartlepool), 12944, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.
- Scotton, Albert Edward, b. Leicester, e. Leicester, 79685, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Selvidge, George, b. Anstey, Leicestershire, e. Leicester (South Wigston, Leicester), 44100, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 23/3/18, formerly 21655, Leicestershire Regt.
- Senior, Arthur James, e. Hemsworth, Yorks, 6224, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 4/3/17.
- Sergeant, Jack, b. Northampton, e. Hamsteels, Co. Durham (Esh Winning, Co. Durham), 1379, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Sergeant, Stuart, b. Richmond, Yorks, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 301712, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/9/17.

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- Sewell, Thomas, b. Carlisle, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6674, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Shanks, James, b. Wrekenton, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 4196, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Sharp, George Edward, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 325319, Pte., d., F. & F., 21/10/18.
- Sheard, William Arthur, b. Batley, Yorks, e. Batley, 301772, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 31/10/18, formerly 27162, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Shearer, Robert, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 3493, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Sheppherd, John William, b. N. Burley, e. Leeds (Gildersome, Leeds), 71038, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Sherriff, Frederick, b. Newbottle, Houghton, Co. Durham, e. Houghton (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 1224, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Shortridge, Lawrence, b. Lamercost, Carlisle, e. Durham (Castle Eden, Durham), 2651, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Shotton, William Henry, b. Bermondsey, e. London, 75661, Pte., d., Germany, 11/4/18.
- Siddall, Robert Selwyn, b. Sowerby Bridge, Yorks, e. Halifax (Sowerby Bridge), 80940, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/6/18.
- Simmons, Edward, b. Hartlepool, e. Newcastle (Gateshead), 32283, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Simons, Philip Wright, b. Mousehole, Cornwall, e. Bodmin (Paul, Cornwall), 301242, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Simpson, Francis Royal, b. Leicester, e. Leeds, 80517, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Simpson, Joseph, b. Heworth, Durham, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (Felling, Co. Durham), 301149, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 22/9/17.
- Simpson, Joseph, e. Hounslow (Twickenham), 301700, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Slack, Ralph, b. Jesmond, Newcastle, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Easington Lane, Co. Durham), 1898, Pte., d., Home, 18/10/14.
- Smiles, George William, e. Chester-le-Street (Pelton Fell, Durham), 3597, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Smiles, Robert, e. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 300535, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Smith, William, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2171, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 6/6/16.
- Smith, Robert, b. Sunderland, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 2490, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Smith, Norman, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 3013, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Smith, John, e. Durham (Brandon, Co. Durham), 3258, Pte., d. of w., Home, 4/6/15.
- Smith, Frank, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Springwell, Durham), 3307, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/11/16.
- Smith, Fred, b. Guist, Norfolk, e. Durham (Low Coxhoe, Co. Durham), 4031, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/3/16.
- Smith, Bertie, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 4/8388, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Smith, David Edwin, b. East Leigh, Southampton, e. Clifton St., London (South Lambeth), 26070, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 8/6/18, formerly 27442 Hussars.
- Smith, John Thomas, b. Blyth, Northumberland, e. Sunderland (South Shields), 73069, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.

- Smith, Harold Victor, b. Leeds, e. Leeds (Beeston, Leeds), 80915, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Smith, Ernest, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham (Fencehouses, Durham), 300682, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Smith, Luke, b. Willington, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Lanchester, Co. Durham), 301848, C.S.M. (W.O., Cl. 11), k. in a., F. & F., 1/3/17.
- Smith, Albert, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 302038, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Smith, Edward George, b. Plumstead, Kent, e. Bexley Heath, Kent (Erith, Kent), 302455, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/10/17.
- Smith, Willie, b. Sharlston, Yorks, e. Wakefield (Normanton), 351273, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Smitheringale, James, b. Middlesbrough, e. Middlesbrough, 80941, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Southern, Thomas, b. Haswell, Durham, e. West Hartlepool (Haswell), 32550, Pte., d., F. & F., 12/12/18.
- Spencer, Harry, b. Clerkenwell, Middlesex, e. Whitehall (Clerkenwell), 302444, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Spencer, Sydney Albert, b. Horndean, Hampshire, e. London (Hyde Park, London, W.), 302860, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Stafford, Robert, b. Sunderland, e. Durham (Sunderland), 2603, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Staines, John Henry, b. Leicester, e. Leicester, 66371, Pte., d., F. & F., 28/9/18, formerly 66371, Leicestershire Regt.
- Stanford, John Thomas, b. Eversham, Beds, e. Bedford (Woburn, Beds), 79803, Pte., d., F. & F., 23/9/18.
- Stanford, William Henry, b. Islington, Middlesex, e. Finsbury (Islington), 301837, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/24693, K.R.R.
- Starling, John Edward, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (High Spen, Rowlands Gill, Durham), 6668, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Stead, Jonas, e. Gateshead (Felling, Co. Durham), 203643, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Steadman, William Herbert, b. Walworth, Surrey, e. Holborn, 301835, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly R/26461, K.R.R.
- Stearman, Thomas, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 2791, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 25/5/15.
- Stephenson, Joseph, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 6750, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Stevenson, Albert, b. Ruddington, Nottingham, e. Durham (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 2507, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Stewart, Charles Edward, b. Harrogate, e. Harrogate, 80990, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/9/18.
- Still, John William, b. Hatcham, e. Camberwell, 302320, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 20/9/17.
- Stirman, George, e. Durham (Pelton, S.O. Durham), 2901, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/2/16.
- Stobart, Matthew Altas, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 295128, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/3/18.
- Stobbart, Matthew, b. Crook, Co. Durham, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Tanfield Lea), 1860, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Stobbart, Alexander, b. Leadgate, Consett, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Bewick Main, Co. Durham), 2063, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.

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- Stockdale, William Henry, e. Durham (Keswick, Cumberland), 3473, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Stoker, John, b. Edmondsley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Edmondsley), 4049, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Stoker, Robert Watson, b. West Hartlepool, e. Hinderwell, Yorks (Easington Village, Co. Durham), 35176, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18.
- Strachan, Robert, e. Chester-le-Street (Newfield, Co. Durham), 3508, Pte., d. of w., Home, 9/1/16.
- Strachan, Henry, e. Chester-le-Street, 300795, Pte., d., F. & F., 7/11/18.
- Street, George, b. Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, e. Stoke-on-Trent (Hartshill), 67567, Pte., d., F. & F., 18/4/17, formerly 36364, North Staffs Regt.
- Surtees, Alexander, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Sunderland), 1168, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 25/5/16.
- Sutterfield, George, b. Boston, Lincs, e. Hamsteels, Co. Durham (Esh Winning, Co. Durham), 2100, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Sutton, Alfred, b. Spennymoor, Co. Durham, e. Bishop Auckland (Leeholme, Bishop Auckland), 4/10048, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Sweeney, Robert, e. Gateshead (Teams, Gateshead), 302893, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 31/5/18.
- Swindell, John Viner, b. Samhills, Surrey, e. Grove Park (Farnborough), 75607, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18, formerly 299963, R.A.S.C.
- Tailford, Frederick, e. Durham (East Stanley, Co. Durham), 2938, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Tait, Henry, b. Morpeth, Northumberland, e. Bede College, Durham, 1977, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 25/9/15.
- Tait, Robert Walton Smith, b. Leadgate, Co. Durham, e. Consett, Co. Durham (Leadgate), 33083, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/11/17.
- Taylor, Thomas, b. Pelton, Co. Durham, e. Pelton (West Pelton), 361, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Taylor, John, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 4161, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/9/16.
- Taylor, Herbert, b. Leeds, e. Leeds, 301771, L/Cpl., d., F. & F., 18/10/18, formerly 26668, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Taylor, Daniel, e. Burton-on-Trent, 302008, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17, formerly 26997, N. Staffs Regt.
- Teasdale, John Joseph, e. Gateshead (Low Fell, Gateshead), 302193, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Teggart, James, e. Durham (Brandon Colliery, Co. Durham), 3562, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Telfer, Robert, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 4182, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Thackwray, Walter Tom, e. Consett, Co. Durham, 4075, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 3/4/16.
- Theobald, Henry, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Grange Villa, S.O. Durham), 3051, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Thirdborough, Alfred Edward, b. Leicester, e. Leicester, 78002, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 37260, Leicester Regt.
- Thompson, Robert Turnbull, b. Whickham, Swalwell, Co. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street (Pelton Fell, S.O.), 1794, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 24/5/15.
- Thompson, Wilfred, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2431, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 17/9/16.
- Thompson, Ebenezer, e. Durham (Stanley, Co. Durham), 2851, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.

- Thompson, John Charles, e. Durham (Fencehouses, Co. Durham), 2868, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Thompson, Richard, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 19938, L/Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 13/4/18.
- Thompson, Alfred Ernest, b. Hetton, Co. Durham, e. Houghton, Co. Durham (Hetton), 36640, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Thompson, Fred, b. Eldon Lane, Co. Durham, e. Bishop Auckland, 81157, Pte., d., F. & F., 27/10/18.
- Thompson, George, b. Gosforth, Northumberland, e. Gosforth, 40975, Pte., d., F. & F., 18/11/18.
- Thompson, Harold, b. Liverpool, e. Liverpool, 88997, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/3/029405, R.A.S.C.
- Thompson, William Frederick, e. Birtley, Co. Durham (Carville, Durham), 300844, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Thornton, John, e. Leeds, 58902, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/17, formerly 37603, W. Yorks Regt.
- Thorpe, Bernard, b. Sheffield, e. Sheffield, 301755, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29891, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Thuburn, Robert, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 3176, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Thurloway, Robert William, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 2735, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Thwaites, Alexander, b. Richmond, Yorks, e. Durham (Stanley, Co. Durham), 2695, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/9/16.
- Thwaites, Arthur, b. Durham, e. Durham, 300295, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Tietjen, Thomas William Norris, b. Bow, Middlesex, e. Hackney Baths, London, N.E. (London, N.), 302487, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/7/17.
- Tighe, Thomas, b. Lanchester, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 4004, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Tilley, John Arthur, b. Bath, Somerset, e. Hounslow (Bedford), 88936, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/31987, R.A.S.C.
- Tinkler, Thomas, e. Beamish, 3062, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Tooke, John Henry, b. Deeping, St. James, e. Grantham (Deeping, Lincs), 80931, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.
- Tomkins, Alfred, b. London, e. Halifax (Kippax, Leeds), 6320, Pte., d. of w., Home, 23/2/17, formerly 6070, West Riding Regt.
- Tongue, Harold George, b. Birmingham, e. Birmingham, 53494, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 12460, South Staffs Regt.
- Trainer, John, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne, 6684, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 7/11/16.
- Tremain, Josiah, b. Gateshead, e. Chester-le-Street, 1417, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Trow, William, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2784, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Tulip, Robert, e. Gateshead (Blaydon-on-Tyne), 202509, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/4/18.
- Tunney, Francis, b. Durham, e. Chester-le-Street, 2794, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Turnbull, Joseph, b. Hetton-le-Hole, Co. Durham, e. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, 2249, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Turner, Christopher, e. Durham (West Stanley, Co. Durham), 2806, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Turner, Ernest Thomas, b. Cardiff, e. West Worldham (Cardiff), 89026, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly T/4/060255, R.A.S.C.

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- Turner, Charles, b. Leeds, e. Pontefract, 301759, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 21/6/17, formerly 29527, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Turner, Jack Foxhall, e. Huddersfield, 301990, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 6269, West Riding Regt.
- Tweddle, Ernest, b. Skipton, Yorks, e. Skipton, Yorks (Middlesbrough), 85559, Pte., d., F. & F., 29/9/18, formerly 3426, Yorks Regt.
- Umney, Sydney Hugh Lionel, b. Lower Edmonton, Middlesex, e. Tronbridge, 302468, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/10/17.
- Vasey, Thomas Henry, b. Durham, e. Durham, 300264, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 15/10/17.
- Veitch, Reuben, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton-le-Spring, 300227, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 14/4/17.
- Vest, Robert, b. Stanley, Co. Durham, e. Stanley, 4252, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 16/11/16.
- Vickers, Thomas Turnbull, b. Tanfield, e. Beamish, 2506, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Wade, Ambrose, b. Oldham, e. Halifax (Norland), 301798, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/6/18, formerly 29397, Northumberland Fus.
- Wainwright, Willie, b. Thornhill Lees, Yorks, e. Dewsbury, 301770, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 26495, K.O.Y.L.I.
- Waiton, Walter, b. Darlington, e. Bradford, 300814, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18, formerly 30001, Northumberland Fus.
- Wakefield, Rylatt, b. Hipperholme, York, e. Halifax (Hipperholme), 80979, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 13/4/18.
- Waldron, David, b. West Bromwich, e. Lichfield (West Bromwich), 75592, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.
- Walker, Albert, b. Leeds, e. York (Leeds), 6120, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29618, West Yorks Regt.
- Walker, Robert Edgar, b. Colne, Lancs, e. Halifax (Carlton, near Skipton, Yorks), 77871, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 5/4/18.
- Walker, Allan, b. Cottingham, Yorks, e. Hull, 88924, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 6/6/18, formerly T/4/092384, R.A.S.C.
- Walker, Frank, b. North Seaton, e. Sunderland (Haswell, Co. Durham), 301705, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/7/17.
- Wallis, Ernest Albert, b. Stapleford, Notts, e. Nottingham, 75384, Pte., d., F. & F., 18/10/18.
- Walpole, John Frederick, b. Loftwood, Norfolk, e. Norwich (East Dereham, Norfolk), 203292, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/3/18, formerly 5569, Norfolk Regt.
- Walters, Ewart George, b. Darlington, e. Manchester, 81571, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 28/5/18, formerly 45816, Lancs Fus.
- Walton, John, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 2819, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Walton, Percy, b. Bradford, e. Leeds, 80975, Pte., d., F. & F., 25/7/18.
- Walton, John Thomas, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham (Hamsterley Colliery, Co. Durham), 302205, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 4/9/16.
- Ward, James William, b. Birtley, Gateshead, e. Beamish, Co. Durham (Craghead), 2406, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Ward, Albert, e. Durham (Edmondsley, Co. Durham), 3900, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Ward, Peter, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 4099, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/3/16.
- Ward, James, b. Sunderland, e. Sunderland, 4/8050, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 15/4/18.

- Ward, Wilson, b. Appleton, Yorks, e. Stockton-on-Tees, 73003, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Ward, George Henry, b. Woodford, Essex, e. Woolwich, 302454, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 21/10/17.
- Ward, George William, b. Kingston, Cambs, e. Luton (Tottenham, near Dunstable), 376440, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18.
- Wardle, John, b. Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street (Newfield, S.O. Durham), 4201, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/7/16.
- Waters, John, e. Chopwell, Co. Durham, 302206, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Watkins, James, e. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 300734, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Watson, Joseph Matthew, b. Heighington, Co. Durham, e. Bede College, Co. Durham, 1983, Cpl., d. of w., F. & F., 10/5/15.
- Watson, Thomas Noble, e. Stanley, Co. Durham (West Stanley), 3555, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 13/11/16.
- Watson, Cuthbert, b. Ryhope, Co. Durham, e. Seaham Harbour (Horden Colliery, Co. Durham), 20728, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Watson, Alfred, b. York, e. Guisborough, Yorks, 250692, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/2/17, formerly 30594, Yorks Regt.
- Watson, Robert, e. Blaydon-on-Tyne, 302202, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Waymouth, Archibald Henry, b. Babbacombe, Devon, e. Abertillery, 81573, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18, formerly 45825, Lancs Fus.
- Weatherburn, Robert, b. South Hill, Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street, 2384, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Webster, Frank Cecil, b. Darlington, e. Sunderland (Darlington), 73077, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 31/3/18.
- Webster, Harold Greenlow, b. Leeds, e. Leeds (Horsforth, Leeds), 301774, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 31782, West Yorks Regt.
- Weddle, Robert, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 2393, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 1/10/16.
- Weddell, George, e. Chester-le-Street (Grange Villa, S.O. Durham), 300564, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Weldon, Michael, e. Durham (Kimblesworth), 3092, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/4/16.
- Wentworth, Frank, b. Leeds, e. Leeds (Bramley, Leeds), 301775, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 31817, West Yorks Regt.
- West, Stanley, b. Kilburn, London, e. Wandsworth (Shepherd's Bush), 26054, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 24/7/18, formerly 19055, Hussars.
- Weston, Herbert D., b. Middlesex, e. West London (Paddington), 301744, Pte., d., F. & F., 22/9/18.
- Whalen, John, b. Durham, e. Durham (Birtley, Co. Durham), 2049, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/10/16.
- Whalley, Herbert, b. Chorley, Lancs, e. Chorley, 81570, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 10/4/18, formerly 45793, Lancs Fus.
- Whelpton, John, b. Gainsborough, e. Gainsborough, 75356, Pte., d., F. & F., 5/9/18.
- Wheeler, Thomas, b. Birmingham, e. Birmingham, 85504, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18, formerly 200507, R.E. (I.W.T.).
- Whinn, Ernest, b. Darlington, e. Darlington, 301729, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 19/2/18.
- Whitaker, Walter, b. Keighley, Yorks, e. Halifax (Keighley), 6175, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16, formerly 29624, Northumberland Fus.

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- Whittaker, Alfred, e. Durham (Sacriston, Co. Durham), 300862, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- White, Henry, b. Lanchester, Co. Durham, e. West Pelton, Co. Durham (Greencroft Stanley, Co. Durham), 717, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/8/15.
- Whiteford, Arthur, b. New Mills, Derby, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (New Mills), 6188, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/11/16, formerly 46587, R.H. and R.F.A.
- Whitfield, William, b. Bewick Main, Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley (Newtown, Birtley), 2051, A/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 21/9/16.
- Whitmore, Ernest, b. Pelton, Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Birtley), 2668, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 2/5/15.
- Whitney, Septimus, e. Durham (South Moor, Stanley), 2834, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 3/1/16.
- Wick, Robert, e. Houghton, Co. Durham, 3072, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 18/9/16.
- Wigham, Matthew, e. Gateshead (Swalwell, Co. Durham), 302261, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 28/3/18.
- Wiles, Edward Henry, e. Woolwich (Brockley), 85561, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 9/6/18, formerly 296113, R.E.
- Wilkinson, John, b. Pelton, Chester-le-Street, e. Chester-le-Street (Pelton), 2420, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 15/3/16.
- Wilkinson, Smurthwaite, b. West Hartlepool, e. West Hartlepool, 301708, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 25/4/17.
- Wilks, Thomas, e. Durham (Chester-le-Street), 3777, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 22/4/16.
- Williams, Nicholas, b. Houghton-le-Spring, Co. Durham, e. Houghton-le-Spring, 2256, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/6/15.
- Williams, William Pierce, b. Edmonton, Middx, e. Walthamstow, 53158, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 9/4/18, formerly R/31551, K.R.R.
- Williams, Edward Benson Burnell, e. Durham (Coxhoe, Co. Durham), 300624, Pte., d., F. & F., 1/10/18.
- Wilson, Andrew, b. Hartburn, Morpeth, Northumberland, e. Bede College, Durham, 1984, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Wilson, Thomas Charles, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2243, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Wilson, Walter, e. Gateshead, 2269, Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Wilson, George, b. Esh, Co. Durham, e. Durham (Quebec, Co. Durham), 2447, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 12/11/16.
- Wilson, Thomas, e. Durham (West Stanley, Co. Durham), 2948, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Wilson, Edward, e. Gateshead (Felling, Co. Durham), 6713, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Wilson, George Henry, b. Gateshead, e. Newcastle (Gateshead), 73394, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/5/18.
- Wilson, Jonathan, b. Birtley, Co. Durham, e. Birtley, 300167, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Wilson, Thomas Henry, e. Gateshead (Newcastle), 302195, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Winn, John, e. Durham (Ushaw Moor, Durham), 3389, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Winter, James Chadwick, b. Medomsley, Co. Durham, e. Ferry Hill, Co. Durham, 3983, Sgt., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Winter, Joseph, e. Durham (New Brancepeth, Co. Durham), 248066, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 27/3/18.
- Winter, William, e. Durham, 302869, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 12/4/18.

- Wood, James, e. Durham (Beamish, Co. Durham), 2885, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.
- Wood, Henry, b. Doncaster, e. Doncaster (Balby), 78008, Pte., d., F. & F., 13/11/18.
- Wood, Charles Waldegrave, e. Durham (Barnsley, Yorks), 2920, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Wood, John William, e. Durham (Langley Moor, Durham), 300633, L/Cpl., k. in a., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Woodhouse, Arthur Charles William, b. Lingwood, Norfolk, e. Fulham, 302058, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 17/4/17.
- Woodrow, George Henry, b. Derby, e. Derby, 85555, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 30/5/18, formerly 66426, R.E.
- Wright, Charles, b. Durham, e. Durham, 2, Sgt., d., Home, 13/12/15.
- Wright, Joseph, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Newcastle (Gateshead), 1933, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Wright, John, b. Newcastle-on-Tyne, e. Gateshead-on-Tyne (Newcastle-on-Tyne), 6694, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 29/9/16.
- Wright, William, e. Durham (Annfield Plain, Co. Durham), 2805, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 26/4/15.
- Young, Robert, e. Durham, 202667, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 11/4/18.
- Young, Albert Edward William, e. Winchester (Ringwood), 301452, Pte., d. of w., F. & F., 1/10/17.
- Younger, Arthur Villers, b. Gateshead, e. Gateshead, 302210, Pte., k. in a., F. & F., 5/11/16.

2/8TH BATTALION

- Archer, George, b. Bradford, Yorks, e. Halifax (Leeds Road), 7384, Pte., d., Home, 15/12/16.
- Lavers, William Henry, b. Plymouth, Devon, e. Plymouth, 301286, Pte., d., Home, 21/1/17.
- Lemon, Sidney, b. Exeter, Devon, e. Exeter, Devon, 301396, Pte., d., Home, 27/3/17.
- Maddison, Edward (Claypath, Durham), 3233, Pte., d., Home, 26/5/16.
- Moran, John, b. Sligo, e. Newcastle-on-Tyne (West Hartlepool), 6242, W.O., Class I (A/S.M.), d., Home, 30/6/15.
- Perkins, Alfred, b. Coseley, Staffs, e. Tipton (Coseley, Staffs), 67702, Pte. d., Home, 14/3/17, formerly S/35844, Lab. Coy., D.L.I.
- Simpson, Walter, b. Long Eaton, Derby, e. Derby (Long Eaton), 67675, Pte., d., Home, 17/3/17.
- Smith, James, e. Longton, 67589, Pte., d., Home, 7/3/17, formerly 35770, North Staffs Regt.
- Warren, Sidney, b. Cheriton Fitzpaine, Devon, e. Exeter (Morchard Bishop, near Exeter), 5910, Pte., d., Home, 11/11/16.

APPENDIX VI

RECORD OF BATTLES AND ENGAGEMENTS

The names of the battles given here are those used in the revised official nomenclature and in the lists of regimental honours. The battles and engagements in which the 8th Battalion took part will, however, be better known by the names given them at the time, and which are used in the accounts contained in this history. There were, of course, other battles or engagements which do not appear in the final list of regimental honours, for the number of these permitted was limited and moreover they were selected from the claims of all the Battalions of the Regiment in accordance with their relative importance, and some have their identity sunk in a title covering a group of several battles or engagements. There are also engagements such as, for instance, the attack on The Butte of Warlencourt on November 5th, 1916, which are omitted from those selected by the Battles Nomenclature Committee, for the Battle of Le Transloy, which covers this area of the Somme fighting, only lasted officially from 1st to 18th October, 1916. The 8th Battalion is not alone affected in this respect, for every regiment has suffered similarly.

THE BATTLES OF YPRES, 1915.—22nd April—25th May, 1915.

[Second Army] Battle of St. Julien, 24th April—4th May.
Battle of Frezenberg, 8th—13th May.
Battle of Bellewarde, 24th—25th May.

THE BATTLES OF THE SOMME, 1916.—1st July—18th November, 1916.

[Fourth Army, 3rd Corps] Battle of Flers-Courcelette, 15th—22nd Sept.
Battle of Morval, 25th—28th September.
Battle of Le Transloy, 1st—18th October.

THE BATTLES OF ARRAS, 1917.—9th April—15th May, 1917.

[Third Army, 7th Corps] First Battle of The Scarpe, 9th—14th April.
(Tactical Action) Capture of Wancourt Ridge.
Second Battle of The Scarpe, 23rd—24th April.

THE BATTLE OF YPRES, 1917.—31st July—10th November, 1917.

[Fifth Army, 19th Corps] Second Battle of Passchendaele, 26th October—10th November.

FIRST BATTLES OF THE SOMME, 1918.—21st March—5th April, 1918.

[Fifth Army, 19th Corps] Battle of St. Quentin, 21st—23rd March.
 Actions at Somme Crossings, 24th—25th March.
 Battle of Rosieres, 26th—27th March.

THE BATTLES OF THE LYS, 1918.—9th—29th April, 1918.

[First Army, 15th Corps] Battle of Estaires, 9th—11th April.
 Battle of Hazebrouck, 13th—15th April.

BATTLE OF THE AISNE, 1918.—27th May—6th June, 1918.

[Sixth French Army, 9th Corps (British)]

The 50th Division was reduced to cadre on account of its heavy casualties in July, 1918, and reconstituted the same month with eight Battalions from Salonika and two from another Division in France.

APPENDIX VII

LIST OF BATTLE HONOURS BORNE BY THE REGIMENT

Aisne, 1914, 1918.
Armentières, 1914.
Ypres, 1915, 1917, 1918.
Grafenstafel.
St. Julien.
Frezenberg.
Bellewarde.
Hooge, 1915.
Loos.
Somme, 1916, 1918.
Albert, 1916, 1918.
Bazentin.
Delville Wood.
Pozieres.
Guillemont.
Flers-Courcelette.
Morval.
Le Transloy.
Ancre Heights.
Arras, 1917, 1918.
Scarpe, 1917.
Arleux.
Hill 70.
Messines, 1917.
Pilckem.
Langemarcke, 1917.
Menin Road.
Polygon Wood.
Broodseinde.
Passchendaele.

Cambrai, 1917, 1918.
St. Quentin.
Rosieres.
Lys.
Estaires.
Hazebrouck.
Bailleul.
Kommel.
Scherpenberg.
Marne, 1918.
Tardenois.
Bapaume, 1918.
Hindenburg Line.
Havrincourt.
Epehy.
Canal du Nord.
St. Quentin Canal.
Beaurevoir.
Courtrai.
Selle.
Sambre.
France and Flanders, 1914-1918.
Piave.
Vittorio Veneto.
Italy, 1917, 1918.
Macedonia, 1916-1918.
Egypt, 1915-1916.
North-West Frontier India, 1915, 1916,
1918.
Archangel, 1918, 1919.

Of the above the following are borne upon THE KING'S COLOUR—

Aisne, 1914, 1918.
Ypres, 1915, 1917, 1918.
Hooge, 1915.
Loos.
Somme, 1916, 1918.

Arras, 1917, 1918.
Messines, 1917.
Lys.
Hindenburg Line.
Sambre.

The following Honours are borne upon THE REGIMENTAL COLOUR—

Salamanca.
Pyrenees.
Orthes.
Alma.
Sevastopol.
Bushire.
Persia.
Relief of Ladysmith.
Vittoria.

Nivelle.
Peninsula.
Inkerman.
Reshire.
Koosh-Ab.
New Zealand.
South Africa, 1899-1902
Afghanistan, 1919.

APPENDIX VIII

HONOURS AND AWARDS

NOTE.—The rank shown in each case is that held at the date of the award.

CROSS OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE

Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull.

COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Colonel W. C. Blackett.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup.	Captain T. A. Bradford.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin.	Captain S. Boys.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. S. Ritson.	Captain A. N. Clark, M.C.
Major G. A. Stevens.	Captain A. M. Gelsthorpe.

BAR TO DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER

Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. S. Ritson.

ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Lieutenant-Colonel J. R. Ritson.

THE MILITARY CROSS

Major J. A. S. Ritson.	Captain B. M. Williams.
Captain A. N. Clark.	Lieutenant N. Clark.
Captain G. D. Gould.	Lieutenant J. F. Hobson.
Captain K. M. Guthrie.	Lieutenant A. M. Jones.
Captain J. Hutchinson.	Lieutenant F. V. Perrott.
Captain W. Johnson.	Lieutenant S. Platten.
Captain P. Kirkup.	Lieutenant A. H. Robinson.
Captain A. V. McLare.	Lieutenant M. A. Smith.
Captain A. Oswell.	Lieutenant J. Stephenson.
Captain E. H. Veitch.	Lieutenant H. B. C. Watt.
Captain R. H. Wharrier.	Lieutenant and Q.M. H. Wilkinson.

BAR TO THE MILITARY CROSS

Captain A. V. McLare.
 Captain E. H. Veitch.
 Captain R. H. Wharrier.

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES

Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull.	Captain J. H. Burrell.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Martin.	Captain A. N. Clark.
Lieutenant-Colonel P. Kirkup.	Captain A. M. Gelsthorpe.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. S. Ritson.	Captain W. Johnson.
Major G. A. Stevens.	Captain E. H. Veitch.
Captain T. A. Bradford.	Captain F. M. Weeks.
Captain S. Boys.	Lieutenant N. Clark.

THE DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL

R.S.M. J. Atkinson.	Sergeant J. Armstrong.
A/R.S.M. E. Wise.	Sergeant A. Beckwith.
C.S.M. W. Adamson.	Sergeant A. Rutter.
C.S.M. A. Booth.	Corporal G. Frater.
C.S.M. J. Dixon.	Corporal J. H. E. Jackson.
C.S.M. J. Hilton.	Corporal F. Jamfrey.
Sergeant S. Aberdeen.	Private J. Arnold.
Sergeant G. Anderson.	Private J. Morrison.

THE MILITARY MEDAL

C.S.M. B. W. Black.	Corporal G. Rogerson.
C.S.M. T. Chrisp.	Lance-Corporal J. J. Armstrong.
C.S.M. I. Hall.	Lance-Corporal J. Kendall.
Sergeant J. Armstrong.	Lance-Corporal T. Surtees.
Sergeant D. Barron.	Private J. Armstrong.
Sergeant A. Beckwith.	Private R. Atkinson.
Sergeant R. Blaney.	Private T. Bates.
Sergeant E. Emmerson.	Private H. Boothe.
Sergeant R. Fairlamb.	Private J. Burns.
Sergeant W. Gregg.	Private R. Clewes.
Sergeant R. Hall.	Private G. Cooper.
Sergeant J. Hunt.	Private J. Dinsley.
Sergeant — Jackson.	Private R. W. Dover.
Sergeant A. Robinson.	Private W. Elliott.
Sergeant J. E. Whittle.	Private D. Fife.
Lance-Sergeant J. Devitt.	Private R. Ghitoni.
Lance-Sergeant J. Redshaw.	Private J. Hall.
Corporal J. A. Cook.	Private T. Heron.
Corporal F. Jamfrey.	Private J. Hunt.
Corporal J. Mulgrew.	Private G. E. Meek.
Corporal F. W. Mullet.	Private D. Molyneux.
Corporal T. Murphy.	Private R. Morgan.
Corporal S. Murray.	Private A. Neal.

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Private W. Nimmons.
Private T. L. O'Brien.
Private W. W. Pickering.
Private F. Pickup.
Private W. Porter.

Private T. Rourke.
Private W. Seymour.
Private — Thompson.
Private W. Wilkinson.

THE MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

A/R.S.M. E. Wise.
Sergeant J. Henderson.
Lance-Sergeant R. Wears.

CROIX DE GUERRE

Captain B. M. Williams.
Sergeant F. E. Dann.

The utmost care has been taken in compiling the foregoing, but owing to the Records being incomplete it is possible some few names have been omitted. Should this be found later to be the case they will be forwarded on a slip for inclusion.

APPENDIX IX

ITINERARY

- 1914
- July 25 Battalion proceeded to Annual Camp at Conway.
- Aug. 2 Ordered to "Stand by" in readiness for return to Durham.
- 3 Entrained at Morfa Station, Conway, for Durham.
- 4 War declared. Battalion in Durham.
- 5 Proceeded to Sunderland and Coast.
- 9 Moved to Cleadon and West Boldon.
- 16 Moved to Gateshead.
- 19 Moved to Ravensworth Park.
- Sept. 1 Moved to Scott's House Camp.
- 23 Returned to Ravensworth Park.
- Oct. 16 Lieutenant-Colonel J. Turnbull took over Command of the Battalion vice Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Blackett to raise and Command Second Line Battalion.
- Nov. 2 Moved into Gateshead.
- 1915
- April 19 Proceeded from Gateshead to join British Expeditionary Force.
- 20 Boulogne. Cassel. St. Marie Capelle.
- 23 Vlamertinghe.
- 24 Proceeded through Ypres into action on Grafenstafel Ridge. Second Battle of Ypres.
- 25-26 In action.
- 27 Withdrawn to Velorenhoek.
- May 2-9 Brielen. St. Jan-ter-Biezen. Brandhoek Woods. Inspected by Commander-in-Chief, Sir John French, near Watou, on 4th.
- 10-30 Brielen. Potijze (G.H.Q. Line). Gas attack and action N.W. Railway Wood on 24th.
- June 1 Poperinghe.
- 3-10 Bassebouv. Composite 6/8th Battalion formed on 8th.
- 11-18 Kruisstraat. Sanctuary Wood. Hooge.
- 20 Dranoutre. 50th Division transferred from 5th to 2nd Corps.
- 21-30 Kemmel (Lindenhoek Trenches), Locre (Billets). Inspected by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Ferguson, commanding 2nd Corps at Dranoutre, on 21st.
- July 1-15 Kemmel (Lindenhoek Trenches), Locre.
- 16 50th Division relieved by 28th Division. March to Armentières.
- July 17-Nov. 12th Armentières.
- July 17-24 Chapelle d'Armentières Trenches.
- Aug. 7-Nov. 12th Houplines Trenches. 6th and 8th Battalions reconstituted as separate units on 7th August.

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Sept.	7	Inspected by General Sir H. Plumer, commanding Second Army.
Oct.	27	Composite 50th Division Battalion inspected by His Majesty The King at Bailleul.
Nov.	12	50th Division relieved by 21st Division.
	13-30	La Creche.
Dec.	1-17	La Creche.
	18	Dickebusch.
	19-31	Sanctuary Wood.
	1916	
Jan.	1-3	Dickebusch.
	4-31	Sanctuary Wood and Dickebusch.
Feb.	1-2	Sanctuary Wood.
	3-5	Railway Dug-outs, Transport Farm.
	6-10	Sanctuary Wood.
	11-12	Maple Copse, Consett, Border Lane, and Cumberland Dug-outs.
	13-17	Dickebusch.
	18-22	Hill 60.
	23-25	Blaupoort Farm, Bedford House, Swan Chateau.
	26-28	Hill 60.
March	1-2	Hill 60.
	3-7	Dickebusch.
	8-11	Blaupoort Farm, Sunken Road, and Railway Dug-outs, Armagh Wood.
	12-13	Dickebusch.
	14-18	Hill 60.
	19-22	Poperinghe.
	23-31	The Bluff.
April	1-2	The Bluff.
	3-4	Canada Huts, Ouderdom.
	5-7	Ridgewood.
	8-14	Vierstraat (M and N Trenches).
	15-16	La Clytte.
	17-19	Ridgewood.
	20-22	Vierstraat (M and N Trenches).
	23	La Clytte.
	24-31	Mont des Cats. Inspected by Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, on 28th.
May	1-27	Mont des Cats.
	28-31	La Clytte.
June	1	La Clytte.
	2-8	Vierstraat (M and N Trenches).
	9-14	Ridgewood.
	15-20	M and N Trenches.
	21-25	La Clytte.
	26-30	M and N Trenches.
July	1-2	M and N Trenches.
	3-7	Ridgewood.
	8-15	M and N Trenches.
	16-18	Bivouac camp, near La Clytte.
	19-21	Kemmel Shelters.
	22-26	G Trenches, Kemmel.
	27-31	Wakefield Huts, Locre.
Aug.	1-8	G Trenches, Kemmel. 19th Division relieved 50th Division on 8th.

- Aug. 9 Locre. Moved to Mont des Cats.
 10 Entrained, Godewaersvelde. Detrained, Candas. Marched to Prouville.
 11-14 Prouville.
 15 Vignacourt.
 16 Villers Bocage.
 17-31 Baisieux Wood.
 Sept. 1-9 Baisieux Wood.
 10-13 Becourt Wood.
 14 The Quadrangle, near Mametz Wood.
 15 Old German line, Bazentin-le-Petit.
 18-19 In action, High Wood, Martinpuich Ridge. Battle of the Somme.
 20-21 Chalk Road, Bazentin-le-Petit.
 22-23 The Quadrangle.
 24-26 Old German line.
 27 Intermediate line and 6th Avenue.
 28-31 Eaucourt l'Abbaye.
 Oct. 1-2 In action. Capture of the Flers line, near Le Sars.
 3 Becourt Wood.
 4-13 Henencourt Wood.
 14-16 Mametz Wood.
 17-22 Henencourt Wood.
 23-24 Becourt Wood.
 25-31 Mametz Wood.
 Nov. 1-2 Mametz Wood.
 3-4 Front line trenches (Snag Trench and support).
 5 In action. Attack on Butte de Warlencourt and Gird Trench.
 6-29 Mametz Wood.
 30 Becourt.
 Dec. 1-27 Warloy. Inspected by Lieutenant-General Sir W. P. Pulteney, commanding 3rd Corps, on 4th.
 28-29 Albert.
 30-31 Bazentin-le-Petit.
 1917
 Jan. 1-3 Bazentin-le-Petit.
 4-8 Front line trenches, Flers sector.
 9-11 Bazentin-le-Petit.
 12-16 Support area, Flers sector.
 17-18 High Wood West Camp.
 19 Mametz Wood.
 20-24 Front line trenches, Flers sector.
 25-26 Bazentin-le-Petit. 50th Division relieved by 1st Australian Division.
 27-28 B Camp, Becourt.
 29-31 Ribemont.
 Feb. 1-9 Ribemont.
 10-11 Le Hamel.
 12-18 Foucaucourt.
 19-23 Genermont Trenches, Berny sector, near Péronne.
 24-26 Support position, Berny sector.
 27-28 Genermont Trenches.
 March 1-3 Genermont Trenches.
 4-5 Pommiers Camp, Foucaucourt.
 6-30 Morcourt.
 31 Naours.

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April	1	Naours.
	2	Gezaincourt.
	3	Rebreuve and Houval.
	4-6	Hericourt.
	7	Mesnil St. Pol.
	8-9	Izel-les-Hameau.
	10	Montenescourt.
	11	Arras. Caves Faubourg de Ronville.
	12-13	Old German line (Beaurains). Hindenburg Line (Telegraph Hill).
	14	In action, Cojeul River and Wancourt Tower Ridge.
	15-20	Telegraph Hill and Ronville Caves.
	21-22	The Harp, Hindenburg Line.
	23-24	Niger Trench, Wancourt. In action near Cherisy.
	26	Niger Trench and Telegraph Hill.
May	27	Arras. Entrained for Warlencourt.
	28-30	Warluzel.
	1	Bienvillers-au-Bois.
	2-3	Bellacourt.
	4-17	Warluzel.
	18-22	Mouchy-au-Bois.
June	23	Saulty.
	24-31	Souastre.
	1-14	Souastre.
	15	St. Martin-sur-Cojeul. Relief of 18th Division begun.
	16-19	Support position, Cherisy sector.
	20-24	Front line trenches, Cherisy sector.
July	25-30	Boisleux-au-Mont.
	1	Boisleux-au-Mont. Inspected by Major-General Sir P. S. Wilkinson, commanding 50th Division.
	2-5	Neuville Vitasse, and Marliere.
	6-10	Front line trenches, Cavalry Farm sector.
	11	Neuville Vitasse.
	12-13	Support area.
	14-18	Front line, Cavalry Farm sector.
	19-26	
	27-30	Henin Camp.
	31	Front line trenches, Cherisy sector.
Aug.	1-4	Front line, Cherisy sector.
	5-7	Support position, "The Nest."
	8-12	Front line, Cherisy sector.
	13-22	Neuville Vitasse.
	23-26	Front line, Cavalry Farm sector.
	27	Marliere and Neuville Vitasse.
	28-30	Support position.
	31	Front line, Cavalry Farm sector.
Sept.	1-5	Front line, Cavalry Farm sector.
	6-8	York Lines, Mercatel.
	9-12	Hindenburg Line.
	13-17	Front line, Cherisy sector. Raid on enemy position, Cherisy, by 8th and 9th Battalions on 15th.
	18-21	Support position, "The Nest."
	22-25	Front line, Cherisy sector.
	26-28	Henin Camp and Hindenburg Line.
	29-30	York Lines, Mercatel.

- Oct. 1-3 York Lines, Mercatel. Relief of 50th Division by 51st Division begun on 2nd.
 4-16 Carlton Hill Camp, Gommecourt.
 17 Entrained at Bapaume for north to join Fifth Army.
 18 Detrained, Esquelbec. Billets, Zeggars Cappel.
 19 Zeggars Cappel.
 20 Ledinghem.
 21 Proven.
 22-29 Suez Camp. 14th Corps staging area.
 30-31 Roussel Farm, Elverdinghe.
- Nov. 1-6 In action, Houthulst Forest. Third battle of Ypres.
 7 Marsouin Camp.
 8-9 Roussel Farm Camp, Elverdinghe.
 10 Entrained Elverdinghe for Watten. Billets, Moulle.
 11-30 Moulle.
- Dec. 1-11 Moulle.
 12 Entrained, Watten. Detrained, Brandhoek, St. Lawrence Camp.
 13-16 St. Lawrence Camp.
 17-18 Potijze.
 19 Close support position, Hamburg area, Passchendaele.
 20-24 Front line, Passchendaele.
 25 Whitby Camp, Potijze. Moved to St. Lawrence Camp, Brandhoek.
 26-27 St. Lawrence Camp. Lieutenant-General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, commanding 8th Corps, inspected Battalion.
 28-30 Intermediate support position, Seine area, Passchendaele.
 31 Whitby Camp, Potijze.
- 1918
- Jan. 1-4 Close support position, Hamburg area, Passchendaele.
 5 Whitby Camp, Potijze.
 6 Embussed Grande Place, Ypres, for Eecke.
 7-16 Eecke.
 17 Entrained, Caestre, for Boisdillinghem area. Detrained, Wizernes. Billets, Moringhem.
 18-29 Moringhem.
 30 Entrained, Wizernes. Detrained, Brandhoek, St. Lawrence Camp.
 31 St. Lawrence Camp.
- Feb. 1-2 St. Lawrence Camp, Brandhoek.
 3 Whitby Camp, Potijze.
 4-5 Intermediate support position, Seine area, Passchendaele.
 6-9 Front line, Passchendaele.
 10-13 St. Jean Camp. 5th Battalion Border Regiment left Brigade to join 66th Division on 13th. 9th Battalion Durham Light Infantry left Brigade to join 62nd Division on 12th.
 14-18 Front line, Passchendaele.
 19 Ypres.
 20 Entrained, Ypres. Detrained, Wizernes. Billets, St. Martin-au-Laert, St. Omer.
 21-28 St. Martin-au-Laert, St. Omer.
- March 1-7 St. Martin-au-Laert, St. Omer.
 8 Entrained, Arques, for south.
 9 Detrained, Longeau, near Amiens. Billets, La Neuville, Corbie.
 10 La Neuville, Corbie.
 11-20 Marcelcave.

280 8TH BATTALION DURHAM LIGHT INFANTRY

- March 21 German offensive opened, St. Quentin front. Moved up to Brusle.
 22 Occupied Grene line, south of Tincourt-Boucly.
 23 In action, Beaumetz Ridge, Le Mesnil. Crossed River Somme at Eterpigny.
 24 Foucaucourt and Estrees.
 25 In action, Marcheipot.
 26 In action, Ablaincourt.
 27-28 In action, Rosieres. Caix, Beaucourt Ridge. Moreuil.
 29 In action, Demuin.
 30-31 Longeau, near Amiens.
- April 1 Longeau, near Amiens.
 2 Entrained, Saleux, south of Amiens.
 3 Detrained, Rue. Billets, Vron.
 4 Embussed for Béthune.
 5-6 Béthune.
 7-8 Neuf Berquin.
 9 German offensive on the Lys opened. In action. River Lawe and Lestrem.
 10-12 In action. Lestrem. Merville. Forêt de Nieppe.
 13 La Motte Chateau. Forêt de Nieppe. Morbecque.
 14-15 Morbecque.
 16-25 Wittes. Lieutenant-General R. B. Haking, commanding 11th Corps, inspected the Battalion on 24th.
 26 Entrained, La Pugnoy, for Aisne Front.
 27 In train.
 28 Detrained, Savigny. Marched to Arcis-en-Ponsart.
 29-30 Arcis-en-Ponsart.
- May 1-4 Arcis-en-Ponsart. Inspected by 9th Corps Commander on 1st.
 5-6 Glennes.
 7-12 Chaudardes. Brigade Reserve position.
 13-26 Front line, Craonne. Raid on German position on 25th.
 27 German offensive on Aisne opened. In action, Craonne. Chaudardes. Concevreux.
- June 28-30 In action, Jonchery. Savigny. Poilly. Sarcy. Chamuzy.
 1-4 Vert-la-Gravelle.
 5 Composite Battalion formed from survivors of 151st Infantry Brigade Battalions, and moved to Nanteuil in forward area. Details of Battalion remained at Vert-la-Gravelle.
 6 Composite Battalion in action, Montaigne de Bligny. Details, Vert-la-Gravelle.
 7-8 Composite Battalion, Chamuzy. In action. Details, Vert-la-Gravelle.
 9-11 Composite Battalion in action, Chamuzy. Details moved on 9th to Broyes.
 12-18 Composite Battalion, Bois de Courton. Relieved 18th by 2nd Regiment 8th Division Italian Army, and moved to Bois de Gouffin. Details, Broyes.
 19 Composite Battalion entrained Germaine for Broyes.
 20 Broyes. New Composite Battalion formed.
 21 Broyes.
 22 Broyes. Battalion transport entrained for base.
 23 Details moved to Les Esarts. Composite Battalion remained at Broyes.

- June 24-30 Composite Battalion at Broyes. Details rejoined from Les Esarts on 30th and Composite Battalion was dispersed.
- July 1 Broyes.
 2 Staging area, St. Sophie Farm.
 3 Entrained, Fere en Champenoise.
 4 Detrained, Longpre. Marched to Doudelainville, near Abbeville.
 5-18 Doudelainville. Orders for reduction of Battalion to Training Cadre received on 6th. Parade for farewell address by Major-General H. T. Jackson on 11th. Personnel surplus to cadre establishment, entrained at Pont Remy for base on 15th. Cadre transport proceeded to Dieppe on 18th.
 19 Cadre moved to Rouxmesnil, near Dieppe.
 20-31 Rouxmesnil.
- Aug. 1-14 Rouxmesnil. Orders received on 14th for transfer of cadres from 50th Division to 39th Division.
 15 Cadre entrained for Rouen.
 16 Detrained, Rouen. Bruyeres Camp.
 17-31 Bruyeres Camp, Rouen.
- Sept. 1-31 Bruyeres Camp, Rouen.
- Oct. 1-31 Bruyeres Camp, Rouen.
- Nov. 1-4 Bruyeres Camp, Rouen. Orders received on 4th for complete demobilization as from the 6th. Band moved to Dieppe on 4th.
 6-10 Demobilization proceeding.
 11 Armistice.
 12-17 Demobilization proceeding.
 18 Demobilization complete.



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8th Battalion, the
Durham light Infantry,
1793-1926..

DATE	ISSUED TO

DATE ISSUED	DATE DUE	DATE ISSUED	DATE DUE

